THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

SKILL AND WORKING-CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS:
A COMPARISON OF SKILLED AND UNSKILLED WORKERS IN EDMONTON

by

© JULIAN TANNER

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled Skill and Working Class Consciousness: A Comparison of Skilled Craftsmen and Unskilled Workers in Edmonton submitted by Julian Tanner in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the relationship between skill level and working-class consciousness; it tests the assumption that skill level is a source of variation in the consciousness of the manual working-class. Previous research in this area has produced inconsistent findings. Some studies have found unskilled workers to be more class conscious than skilled workers. Conversely, other research has revealed skilled craftsmen to be the main carriers of a radical class consciousness.

Against a backcloth of contradictory research findings, a sample of craft and non-craft workers drawn from two different plants in Edmonton were surveyed with regard to their work attitudes, perceptions of management, industrial ideologies, political attitudes and behaviour, and images of the class structure. One plant was involved with aircraft repair work, and employed a large proportion of skilled craftsmen. The other plant manufactured home insulation; the bulk of its work-force was unskilled.

The findings indicated that the craftworkers in both plants displayed a greater degree of intrinsic involvement with their jobs than the unskilled men in either plant. For the unskilled men, job satisfaction was largely limited to the level of pay.

However, attitudes about job tasks bore no straightforward relationship to workers' appraisal of their employer. The two groups who stand out as being least sympathetic to management were the skilled aircraftsmen and the unskilled home insulation workers, particularly the younger ones.

An examination of workers' more generalized industrial ideologies similarly revealed a far from straightforward pattern. Overall, skill level is inversely related to Left-Wing ideology. However, the relationship was not very strong, and only a small amount of the variation in workers' industrial ideology is actually accounted for. Those findings were interpreted as indicating, firstly, that ideological thinking is not very central to workers' lives and, secondly, that workers' consciousness is characterized by contradiction.

Contradiction is also manifest in workers' political attitudes and behaviour. The men most alienated in the work setting - namely the young unskilled home insulations workers -- were the ones least likely to vote and least likely to identify with the new Democratic Party (N.D.P.). Conversely, the small amount of N.D.P. voting and identification emanates from the ranks of the craft workers -- the men least alienated with their job tasks.

Finally, perceptions of class were examined. The only item that appears to have uncovered much variation in workers' views of class was a forced-choice. Question: A greater percentage of craftsmen than non-craftsmen were inclined to identify with the middle-class than the working-class. However, responses to the open-ended questions indicate that the concept of class does not figure very prominently in either craft or non-craftmens' understandings of inequality.

In conclusion, the picture of working-class consciousness that emerges from this study is a murky one. Neither craftsmen nor non-craftsmen appear to be either obviously bourgeois or unequivocably proletarian: the impact of skill level upon working class consciousness remains problematic.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER PAGE

1. SKILL LEVEL AND THE INTERNAL STRATIFICATION OF THE WORKING CLASS.......... 1
    - Introduction.......... 1
    - Skilled and Unskilled Workers in the Class Structure.......... 4
    - Skill Level as a Source of Variation in Working Class Consciousness.......... 13
    - The Focus of the Research.......... 21
    - Footnotes.......... 24

2. THE RESEARCH DESIGN.......... 25
    - Airfix Industries.......... 25
    - Glyberforce Canada Limited.......... 28
    - The Survey.......... 35
    - The Sample.......... 36
    - Evaluation of the Sample.......... 38
    - Social Characteristics of the Two Workforces.......... 40
    - Conclusion.......... 45
    - Footnotes.......... 47

3. WORKERS AND THEIR JOBS.......... 48
    - Characteristics of the Job.......... 48
    - Involvement with the Job.......... 55
    - Sources of Work Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction.......... 59
    - Expectations of the Job.......... 69
    - Attitudes Towards Pay.......... 73
    - Conclusions.......... 78
    - Footnotes.......... 79

4. WORKERS' INDUSTRIAL CONSCIOUSNESS.......... 81
    - Workers and Their Companies.......... 81
    - Technical and Relational Criticism of Management.......... 87
    - Workers' Generalized Industrial Ideologies.......... 91
    - Discussion..........100
    - Contradictory Consciousness: Sources and Explanations..........103
    - Conclusions..........106
    - Footnotes..........107

5. POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR..........109
    - Labour Politics in Alberta: The Historical Background..........109
    - Labour Politics in the Present Study..........111
    - Voting Behavior and Party Identification..........113
    - The Perception of Labour Politics..........118
    - Conclusions..........121

6. IMAGES OF THE CLASS STRUCTURE..........124
    - The Empirical Study of Class and Class Consciousness..........125
    - The Perceptions of Class in the Present Study..........127
    - Patterns of Sociability..........144
    - Conclusions..........145

CHAPTER PAGE

7. SKILLED AND UNSKILLED WORKERS IN THE CLASS STRUCTURE..............147
    Summary of Findings...147
    Directions for Further Research.............................154

8. REFERENCES..158

9. APPENDIX: THE QUESTIONNAIRE..................................167

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
1.	The Occupational Composition of The Glyberforce and Airfix samples	37
2.	Age distribution of the sample	41
3.	Family background	43
4.	Length of Service by Company and Skill Level	44
5.	Country of birth by Company and Skill Level	45
6.	Opportunity to try out ideas by Company and Skill Level	49
7.	Determinants of Pace of Work by Company and Skill Level	51
8.	Find Pace of Work too fast by Company and Skill Level	52
9.	Perception of the Skill Requirements of the job by Company and Skill Level	54
10.	Preference for Previous Job by Company and Skill Level	56
11.	Liking of Present Job by Company and Skill Level	58
12.	Things Liked Best About Present job by Company and Skill Level	60
13.	Things liked least about present job by company and Skill Level	64
14.	Change desired in present job by Company and Skill Level	68
15.	The most important features of a job by Company and Skill Level	72
16.	Proportion Rating 'Important' aspects as one of the best features of the present job by Company and Skill Level	73
17.	Adequacy of Take-Home pay by Company and Skill Level	75
18.	Assessment of present firm as a firm to work for by Skill Level and Company	81
19.	Perceptions of the interests of management by Skill Level and Company	83
20.	Assessment of Firm's ability to pay more without damaging its prospects for the future by Skill Level and Company	85
21.	Correlations between Ideology Items	94

22. Ideology factor weights 95

23. Ideology and Related Variables: Correlations 96

24. Step-Wise Regression of Ideology on Skill Level, Company, Age and Birth Place 97

25. Step-Wise Multiple Regression of Ideology on Skill Level, Age and Country of Birth by Company 98

26. Interest in Politics by Skill Level and Company 112

27. Voting Behaviour by Skill Level and Company. 1979 Provincial Election and 1979 Federal Election 114

28. Party Identification by Skill Level and Company 117

29. Attitude towards working-class support for a specific Political Party by Skill Level and Company 120

30. Belief in the existence of classes by Company and Skill Level 127

31. Perception of number of social classes in Canada by Company and Skill Level 128

32. Self-placement in the class structure by Company and Skill Level 129

33. Perceptions of Possibility of social mobility by Company and Skill Level 134

34. Social class Identification using Forced choice classification 135

35. Perceived Determinants of social class by Skill Level and Company 138

36. Images of Society by Skill Level and Company 140

37. Perception of comparative economic situation of skilled and unskilled workers by skill level and company 142

38. Perceived class situation of craftsmen and non-skilled workers by skill level and company 143

39. Occupations of friends by skill level and company 144

CHAPTER ONE

SKILL LEVEL AND THE INTERNAL STRATIFICATION OF THE WORKING CLASS

Introduction

The focus of this research project is the relationship between the objective features of manual workers' life situations and their subjective perceptions of, and responses to, socially structured inequalities. Regardless of whatever else they might disagree about, most students of social stratification would probably concur with the assessment that the core of the working class is still comprised of those in manual occupations. Nonetheless, the ostensibly shared class location that such workers occupy does not produce a homogeneous and united "working class" response to the prevailing economic and social arrangements. In addressing itself to this issue, the present research is predicated on the assumption that the working-class is internally differentiated, and that variations in working class consciousness are linked to a differential structural location within the manual occupational category.

Previous research into the development of class consciousness has accorded a seminal role to individuals' primary social relationships. A succinct statement on this matter has been provided by David Lockwood:

> For the most part men visualize the class structure of their society from the vantage points of their own particular milieux, and their perceptions of the larger society will vary according to their experiences of social inequality in the smaller societies in which they live out their daily lives.
>
> Lockwood, 1975:16

The major sources of inspiration for Lockwood's dictum were the findings of a number of empirical investigations undertaken in the 1950s. The results from these studies, the best known of which are those of

Popitz (1957) and Willener (1957), suggested that individuals generally perceived the class structure in one of two ways: either as a conflict based dichotomy or as a harmonious prestige hierarchy. It was also found that the tendency to view society in these two ways corresponded to the manual/non-manual division: thus the manual working class is inclined to recognize a power-based dichotomy, the non-manual middle class a status hierarchy. These variations are explained in terms of the differing material circumstances of manual and non-manual workers.

This study proceeds with the assumption that the industrial subculture is the important source of working class consciousness, and that workplace experiences provide individuals with the "raw materials" (cf Bott, 1957) for evaluating relationships with employers, their role in the production system, and ultimately, their position in the class structure (Murphy and Morris, 1961:383; Caplow, 1964:4; Leggett, 1968:61; S. Hill, 1974:11; Davis, 1979:174). Thus, "the work situation provides the most important set of conditions shaping the social imagery of industrial man: for it is at work that relationships and experiences of superiority and inferiority, of solidarity and separation, of frustration and achievement are most persuasive, most visible and therefore most influential" (Mackenzie, 1975:173. Emphasis in the original).

For those of a Marxian persuasion, this viewpoint is axiomatic. Summarizing the Marxist position, Mann writes:

> According to Marx himself, the consciousness of the proletariat emerges from its direct and practical experience of the fundamental contradiction between the existing individual relations of production and the emerging collective forces of production. While capitalist relations are based on individual private property, the productive forces develop a proletariat whose power is collectively based and experienced. Working class consciousness grows dialectically, therefore, with experience in trade

> unions, in political parties and in the sphere of production itself...consciousness grows...as the worker links his own concrete experience to an analysis of wider structures and then to alternative structures.
>
> Mann, 1973:12-13

Although given fullest reign by them, Marxists are not alone in assigning the work situation a crucial explanatory role in the formation of class consciousness. Indeed, in the last twenty-five years or so, empirical sociologists have focused a good deal of attention upon manual workers' varied responses to their work situation. In 1960, Blauner had noted the inequitable distribution of 'job satisfaction' among manual workers, and outlined a number of work-related factors that affect job satisfaction. The same author's subsequent speculations about the relationship between types of production technology and worker alienation (1964) has similarly proven to be very influential. These and similar studies gave preliminary indication that the workplace did not provide those in manual occupations with a single, universal experience. More importantly, they served as a warning that the working class should not be viewed as a monolithic and undifferentiated entity.

In terms of this last point, it can be suggested that questions of class consciousness unduly anticipate the issues of class formation and, particularly, class homogeneity. There is little that is useful, as Lockwood has remarked, in any analysis of working class consciousness "that manifests no concern with the internal structural differentiation of the working class in sociological terms" (Lockwood, 1960:251). Similarly, in reference to the abstracted, metaphysical conceptions of the working-class found in some Marxist texts, Goldthorpe insists that "to speak of different modes of consciousness as being 'true' or 'false' would seem rather obviously unsatisfactory where these can be related to systematic differences in life-chances and experiences within the working class...which may in turn be associated with the differential location of occupational or other groups in the structure of market, work and community relationships" (Goldthorpe, 1972:354).

The research study described in the following pages speaks directly to this issue. It is predicated on the assumption that the different structural location of fully skilled and unskilled manual workers is a source of variation in working-class consciousness.

Skilled and Unskilled Workers in the Class Structure

Since the middle part of the last century, the distinctive position occupied by skilled workers in the class structure has been well recognized. The classic statement has been provided by Eric Hobsbawm who, in discussing early Victorian Britain, argues that "an artisan or craftsman was not under any circumstances to be confused with a labourer" (Hobsbawm, 1964:275). Characterized in Hobsbawm's view, by the size and regularity of his earnings, the superior work and market situation of the "labour aristocrat" ensured that skilled and unskilled workers did not enjoy equal life chances. Their relatively advantaged position in the division of labour concomitantly shaped their social and political outlook, for the skilled craftsmen were generally viewed as "more respectable and politically moderate than the mass of the proletariat" (1964:272). Indeed, it is upon this theme that most discussions of the role of a culturally distinct working-class elite have turned. Labour aristocracies are depicted as a distinct segment within the working class and as an important obstacle to the development of a unified and, by implication, "class conscious" proletariat (Mackenzie, 1973:170).

However, those who espouse the existence of a nineteenth century labour aristocracy also argue that the development and spread of mass production techniques destroyed the privileged position of the highly skilled craftsman and, with it, the gulf between skilled and unskilled workers. Hobsbawm argues that the hey-day of the labour aristocrat was between 1840-1890. The rise of mass production techniques severely undermined the ability of the tradesman to restrict entry to his trade -- an important source of his bargaining power. The years since the end of World War I have seen the consolidation of mass-production techniques which, in turn, have led to the growth of a large stratum of semi-skilled machine operators. According to this argument, the decline of the informal craft workshop, the increasingly similar nature of industrial settings, and the reduction of income differentials between skilled and unskilled workers have combined to create an increasingly homogeneous and unified working-class.

Claiming their inspiration from Marx, many writers are willing to embellish the thesis that twentieth century developments in the structure and organizaton of capitalism have eliminated skill-based divisions within the working class. Braverman's (1974) relatively recent study can be read as being broadly representative of this viewpoint. His concern is with the general transformation of the labour process under monopoly capitalism: the kernel of his thesis is found in the books' sub-title, "the degredation of work in the twentieth century". He argues that the techniques and organizational practices of monopoly capitalism have led to the de-skilling and proletarianisation of large sections of the American labour force, particularly the traditional craft sectors. The thrust of this and similar studies and commentaries (R. Hill, 1978; Benson, 1978) is two-fold. Firstly, they lay stress upon increasing class homogenisation, and the concomitant uniformity of workers' work and market situations. Secondly, the concept of a labour aristocracy is treated as being of primarily historical interest rather than as a factor influencing contemporary theories of class formation and class consciousness.[1]

Nonetheless, there is another group of writers who dispute the view that twentieth century developments have necessarily marked the end of working-class elites, and their pernicious influence upon working-class consciousness. These scholars attest to he enduring importance of the skill divide within the working class. Their argument is that, rather than placing more and more workers in undifferentiated work and market situations, industrialization generates deep structural divisions within the working-class. As William Form (1973:697) has argued, "industrialization and structural differentiation of society may not homogenize industrial workers but rather create internal cleavages which increase the social power of skilled workers and decrease the possibility of a unified and radical working-class movement".

Form draws this conclusion on the basis of his comparative study of auto-workers in four countries. In terms of both market and work situation, he uncovered significant differences between skilled and unskilled workers. The skilled men earn 50 percent more than their unskilled work-mates, experience greater control and autonomy in their work, express more job satisfaction, are more involved in an occupational culture, more committed to union activities, and participate more in the local community than did the unskilled ones. They also came from more privileged backgrounds than their non-skilled counterparts, and were better educated. In addition, they tended to be older, more secure in their jobs, and had experienced less unemployment than their less skilled work-mates. Form argues that the background and experience of the skilled workers leads them to form a socially distinctive and cohesive group that controls the industrial sub-culture. The ideological direction of their influence, Form notes, is of a decidedly conservative nature.

Arguing along similar lines, Aronowitz (1973:77) notes the self-serving role played by skilled workers, particularly those of Anglo-Saxon ethnic background, in the organization and direction of American trade unionism. They

> ...quickly established their own relationships among themselves as well as their hegemony over the operatives. Characteristically, skilled workers within industrial plants recognized their privileged objective position and wish to maintain it.

Arnowitz accounts for the low level of class consciousness displayed by the American working class by reference to the ability of skilled workers to dominate working-class institutions and provide American workers with a conservative ideological direction.

Probably the strongest recent statement regarding the importance of structural differentiation within the working-class has been provided by Gavin Mackenzie (1973). On the basis of his study of skilled craftsmen in Rhode Island, U.S.A., Mackenzie draws two inter-connected conclusions. He argues, firstly:

> That there exists in the middle ranges of the American class structure an aristocarcy of skilled labour, isolated both from the working class and from the lower reaches of the established middle-class. (p. 162)

His second conclusion is that:

> ...it should be abundantly clear...that at least at the present time in American society, craftsmen and non-skilled manual workers share anything but a

> common class situation: the term "aristocracy of labour" would appear to be as applicable now as in the latter part of the nineteenth century. (p. 173)

The thrust of the argument so far has been to juxtapose proletarianisation and internal class stratification as two mutually exclusive perspectives. However, there is some evidence to suggest that the differences between some of the writers who posit proletarianisation as the most likely course of development for the working-class and those writers who argue for the continuing importance of segementation and internal stratification, might be more apparent than real; the two perspectives share common ground in that they both recognize the distinct and divisive role played by craftsmen in the working class.

This common ground is reflected in the various representatives of what might be called the new wave of American Marxist theorizing. Erik Olin Wright, for instance, argues that many craft occupations are characterized by their contradictory class location; that is, the location of craft workers in the production system is such that they share basic class interests with both major social class groupings (1980). Somewhat ironically, perhaps, a similar prognosis is implied by Braverman and his followers. Although insisting that the overall trend is in the direction of class homogenisation, Braverman nonetheless identifies a relatively privileged group of highly paid, highly unionized craft workers whose overall social situation contrasts dramatically with unskilled workers, and the large -- and expanding -- numbers of non-unionized, primarily female workers in clerical employment and the services industries. In Braverman's words:

> The concentration of better-paid employment among craftsmen...on the one side, and the further tendency of the mass of working-class jobs to shift in the direction of lower-paid female occupations,

> clearly brings about a polarization of income among job holders.
>
> (Braverman, 1974:393)

A broadly similar conclusion is reached by Stark (1980) in his sympathetic critique of Braverman. In his reformulation of the Braverman thesis, Stark suggests that scientific management destroyed craft workers control of the work process rather than their relatively privileged position within the working class. Craft workers were not eliminated from the work process; rather, their supervisory role was replaced by a bureaucratized supervisory structure. Arguing that, even in non-craft unions, skilled tradesmen in the United States still enjoy power (such as veto rights) out of all proportion to their numbers, Stark's thesis can be summed up as follows:

> Rationalization eliminated craft control of the entire labour process but it did not eliminate the need for skilled workers. Processes of capitalist development have not led to an absolute deskilling of the working-class but to a polarization of skills within it. The cyclical introduction of new technologies operates to reproduce positions for skilled workers both in production and maintenance.
>
> (1980:115)

The last sentence in the above quotation also directs attention to another contentious issue in the Braverman formulation: it is unclear whether or not he and his followers are arguing that all craft jobs have been, or are in the process of being, de-skilled. Hobsbawm recognised that in the course of the nineteenth century what counted as 'aristocratic' occupations changed: that in the last quarter of that century the crafts (for example, printing, cabinet making) which had traditionally been at the 'centre of gravity' of the 'labour aristocracy' were being replaced in that pinnacle position by the newer metal trades.

Much the same kind of argument has more recently been made by Lee (1981) and Mackenzie (1973) to describe twentieth century changes in the class structure. Lee argues that whilst technological change may be in the process of de-skilling some traditional crafts, such as printing, other traditional crafts, such as engineering and the building trades, have made their reappearance in motor manufacturing, the petro-chemical industries, and aeronautics. Likewise, Mackenzie argues that whilst twentieth century developments have eliminated some trades, this should not be interpreted as evidence for the disappearance of the distinctive craft strata within the manual working-class:

> To be sure, craftsmen have experienced periods of economic deprivation; certain trades have become obsolete while others have risen to take their place. But such events cannot be taken to indicate that skilled and non-skilled workers have ever been merged into a single class.
>
> (Mackenzie 1973:173)

A broadly similar conclusion is reached via an altogether different route by the newly emergent radical political economists. Departing from Marxist orthodoxy -- with its emphasis upon proletarianisation -- the radical political economists stress the countervailing forces which internally divide the working-class. In their formulation, managerial control of the labour process and the subordination of labour is ensured by the development of segmented labour markets. The simplist version of this argument depicts the labour market as being divided into primary and secondary sectors. Monopolistic, capital intensive, technologically sophisticated firms and industries characterise the primary sector. Here workers are highly unionized, well paid and receive a wide range of benefits. The secondary sector, on the other hand, encompasses small firms in the service and non-durable manufacturing industries, such as clothing and food processing. Workers in secondary sector industries tend to be non-unionized, non-white and female. There is the further argument that the industries characteristic of the two sectors have differing requirements of their work force.

The primary sector, with its high technology and monopolistic control of its product market, is able to stabilize its production needs. What it requires from its work force is experience and, most of all, stability. The secondary sector, on the other hand, is far more competitive, and employers are obliged to take account of fluctuations in demand for their product. To facilitate the necessary adjustments, employers actively recruit an unstable labour force, one that is likely to be characterized by a high rate of turnover, or is easily made redundant. Hence the interest shown by secondary sector employers in women and ethnic minorities. The existence of primary and secondary labour markets ensures, in the view of dual labour market theorists, a bifurcated working class. A more recent version of this argument now identifies three distinct labour market segments -- the secondary market, the subordinate primary market, and the independent primary market. Nonetheless, the basic argument remains the same:

> The development of twentieth century capitalism has fractured, rather than unified the working class. Workers have been divided into separate groups, each with its distinct job experiences, distinct community cultures, and distinct consciousness.
>
> (Edwards, 1979:184)

This is also the theme of a highly original strand of neo-Marxist theorizing emanating from France. Many of the variables used to delineate primary from secondary labour markets in North American theorizing similarly distinguish a 'new' working-class from the 'old' for continental theorists. Writers such as Mallet (1975) argue that the rise of a new, automated technology has created a new, highly skilled, secure, well paid working class, located in the industries of the new process technology -- petro-chemicals, electronics, for instance. The twist in the tail of this thesis -- the element that sets it apart from the North American labour market theorists -- is that it is this new working-class, rather than workers employed in the more traditional industrial sectors, who are the principal carriers of a radical working-class consciousness.

Thus it is possible to discern theorists in the Marxist tradition who recognize the importance of structural divisions within the working class. This acknowledgement constitutes a form of convergence with what might be interpreted as the Weberian argument that the working class, defined in terms of shared market capacities, is divided into stable and often competing factions based, for instance, upon ethnic and sexual differences as well as skill level.

This is not to say that there are no differences between the two perspectives. Marxists tend to regard intra-class solidarity and homogeneity as the 'natural' state of affairs, departures from which are to be explained by reference to management inspired 'sectionalism'. These divisions -- black against white, men against women, indiginous white craftsmen against unskilled immigrant workers -- are, nonetheless, only of temporary importance, and likely in the course of capitalist development to be eliminated. From the Weberian perspective, however, intra-class divisions are the historical norm under capitalism; indeed, they are an endemic feature of all unequal societies. Differences of emphasis aside, the common recognition of internal divisions within the working class sets the scene for the current study.

Skill Level as a Source of Variation in Working Class Consciousness

The specific issue being addressed in this study is whether the variations in work and market situation that derive from differences in skill level effect working-class consciousness, and, if so, in what ways. It is a question that has been less than adequately dealt with in previous research.

By and large, Marxist sociologists have focused their attentions upon the structure and composition of the working class rather than its social consciousness (Wright, 1980; Freedman, 1975; Wachtel, 1975). Braverman, for instance, has clearly delineated the parameters of his work: he writes, "no attempt will be made to deal with the modern working class on the level of its consciousness, organization or activities. This is a book about the working class as a class in itself, not as a class for itself (Braverman, 1974:26-27, emphasis in the original).

On the other hand, non-Marxist researchers who have addressed themselves to the question of sources of variation in working-class attitudes have tended to conceptualize the issue in a rather narrow fashion. For instance, plant size and production technology are two aspects of the work situation that have frequently been studied. However, these variables are not used to explain variations in working-class consciousness; rather, and somewhat less ambitiously, they explain intra-class differences in alienation -- or, more accurately, job satisfaction (Blauner, 1964; Woodward, 1965; Fullan, 1970) and voting behavior (Lipset, 1960; Ingham, 1969).

The theoretical scope of the present research necessitates the adoption of a perspective on workers' social consciousness that is not limited to such piece-meal concerns as job satisfaction, voting patterns, etc. Accordingly, the focus of the study is on skill level as a structural source of variation in working-class consciousness. For present purposes it will be useful to examine research that has been addressed to this issue.

The original formulation of the labour aristocracy thesis by Marxist historians leaves little doubt that the work and market situation enjoyed by skilled craftsmen engenders industrial and political conservatism. Subsequent sociological analysis, charting much the same kind of territory in the form of the embourgeoisement thesis, has offered an essentially similar view of the relationship between skill level and class consciousness. Hence a prevailing orthodoxy which depicts skilled workers -- largely because of their greater affluence -- as vulnerable to the influences of middle-class values and life-styles, leaving the mass of unskilled workers as the bearers of traditional proletarianism. Consequently:

> Probably the most widespread and accepted hypothesis in the field of political sociology is the notion that an increase in wealth leads to an increase in conservatism. In connection with manual occupations, this has meant that we should expect a direct relationship between skill level and conservatism.
>
> (Hamilton, 1965:390)

The reason that this viewpoint has become the accepted orthodoxy is doubtless related to the fact that there is much survey evidence which supports it (see, for example, Lipset, 1960; Zeitlin, 1967). However, it is not a universal picture, and other research evokes a very different portrayal of the skill-consciousness relationship. The most radical departure from the orthodox position is offered by the already referred to new working-class theorists who view well-qualified technical workers as the emergent revolutionary vanguard of the working-class. According to Mallet, what distinguishes advanced sector workers from more 'traditional' workers is their concern with the qualitative, as opposed to quantitative, aspects of work. The high levels of skill, job involvement, job security, and earnings kindle a set of work aspirations -- principally, demands for greater decision-making powers -- that are, however, largely unfulfilled. Frustrations ensue, converting the workers in the advanced sector to revolutionary socialism. Although the thesis has been damaged by empirical research (Gallie, 1978; Low-Beer, 1978), it does offer a partial explanation of the sometimes militant behaviour of skilled workers in the advanced industrial sectors, at least in some national settings (e.g. France, Italy).

Nor is this militancy necessarily limited to the skilled technicians who straddle the manual/non-manual occupational divide. There is research which indicates that on occasion, traditional Blue-collar craftsmen have been at the forefront of radical working-class movements (a frequently cited example in the British literature is the role played by engineering craftsmen in the cultivation of a radical class consciousness on Clydeside during World War One. See James Hinton, 1973).

Thus, in most contexts and circumstances, skilled workers are appropriately characterized by their political moderation and social integration. But there are times and places where they are at the forefront of industrial and political radicalism. Other research -- particularly case-studies where there is not the preoccupation with voting behavior that is characteristic of large scale social surveys -- reveals an even less straightforward relationship between skill level and working-class consciousness. A case in point is Wedderburn and Crompton's case study of a large chemical complex in North East England (1972). They collected information on a wide range of industrial concerns from samples of craft-workers (fitters, plumbers, electricians, boilermen) and semi-skilled general workers (process workers and machine minders). They found, first of all, significant variations in the attitudes held by the two main occupational groups about their work. The craftsmen expected -- and by and large received -- greater intrinsic satisfaction from work than did the semi-skilled workers. (Though, it should be noted, both groups accorded prime importance to the essentially "instrumental" features of their jobs -- economic rewards and security). The craftsmen were also more critical than the general workers of the quality of supervision they received; they claimed that their work was not well organized or planned and that, as a consequence, their own job autonomy was threatened. By contrast, the general workers did not hold any great expectations that their work would be interesting and, in so far as it was (in the case of the process workers), this was regarded as an unexpected bonus.

Although the site had a local reputation for industrial militancy, the causes of this militancy varied. Among the general workers, particularly the machine minders, industrial unrest (labour turnover, absenteeism, and strikes) was linked to worker boredom and an aggressive resolve to defend the one positive feature of the job -- the money. The origins of the craft workers' militancy were more complicated but rooted in, and part of, "craft conscious" behavior that the authors characterize in terms of the determination to protect their conception of craft work. This involved the realization of their expectations of interesting work, undertaken with the maximum amount of autonomy and discretion. In so far as these important expectations were not met -- because of, principally, an interfering and inefficient management -- their sense of self-worth as highly skilled craftsmen was damaged. This violation of basic craft principles -- as they saw it -- made craft-inspired militancy a distinctive feature of labour relations at the Seagrass site. Indeed, the craft workers were widely viewed as the primary carriers of the militant tradition that the plant -- and the area -- enjoyed. In the broadly held view of the craftsmen, the semi-skilled workers were seen as being ripe for managerial manipulation; in the words of one tradesmen, the general, semi-skilled workers were "Carnation milk creatures...docile and easily persuaded by management" (1972:141). Nor, on other indicators, was there much evidence to suggest that the craftsmen were any more conservative in their industrial attitudes than their less skilled colleagues. As a group, they were no more likely to accept the harmonious version of the football team analogy of industrial relations than the semi-skilled men.[2] They were also more critical of the material and symbolic advantages enjoyed by the low level white collar employees than were the general workers. But what was more surprising, given the usual sectionalist overtones of "craft consciousness" was that the thrust for greater egalitarianism with regards to wages came from the tradesmen. Whereas the general workers, in response to the question, "are there any groups of workers here who you think get paid too little for what they do?", identified themselves, the craftsmen directed attention towards the lowest paid and the least skilled. Similarly, the feeling that the white-collar and supervisory grades were over-paid emanated from the craftsmen rather than the unskilled workers.

Quite clearly, this picture of the craft worker and his world is very different from that usually associated with the concept of "labour aristocracy". Certainly, the attitudes and behaviour of these craft workers do not fit very easily into any typology that rests upon a crude distinction between radical unskilled workers and conservative craftsmen. In fact, and as we have already seen, both groups shared a similar predilection for militant industrial activity. In the case of the tradesmen, militancy had its basis in the defence of their craft;[3] with the general workers, it is rooted in "instrumental collectivisim" -- essentially a weak form of trade union consciousness, indicated by a sensitivity to the cash nexus.

An even more complicated picture is thrown up by Brown et al's study of shipbuilding workers in North East England (1970; 1973; 1975). Once again, skill level fragments workers' consciousness, but not in a manner that comfortably supports the conventional wisdom. The authors emphasize that Wallsend fulfills most of the "ideal-typical" characteristics of a working-class occupational community (cf. Lockwood, 1975). Shipbuilding is the major industry in the area, and shipbuilding workers form the largest single industrial group. It is an almost exclusively working class town, with a relatively stable population and a long history of economic and social impoverishment. There is, also, the familiar pattern of closely knit family and friendship networks.

On the face of it, then, all the structural conditions for the development of a unified class consciousness are met. However, there are a number of features of the shipbuilding industry that have the effect of dividing shipbuilding workers and, consequently, decomposing their social perspectives. First of all, shipbuilding is an industry characterized by both the large proportion of skilled workers that it employs (two thirds of all manual workers are skilled) and its occupational diversity. The authors state that the Wallsend shipyard has as many as twenty different types of trade, plus varying grades of semi-skilled and unskilled labour. Moreover, there are highly structured and long standing differentials between the skilled and non-skilled workers. Nine different unions operated in the shipyard, each having control over both recruitment and work apportionment.

Not surprisingly, the existence of different groups of craft and non-craft workers had important implications for both the kinds of work-place solidarities created and the types of social consciousness generated. For instance, workers' identifications lay less with other shipbuilding workers as a whole than with their particular occupation: occupational identification developed at the expense of a broader industrial solidarity. This was particularly the case with the apprentice-trained craftsmen:

> Apprenticeship training not only transmits the skills and the mystery of craft, but also leads to a clear social definition of group membership and a homogeneous group composition...
>
> the crafts group can be seen both as a moral community and as an interest group. The members of a craft group have a sense of exclusive competence in the use of certain tools and technique and a belief in their right to protect this area against the encroachments of other groups.
>
> (Brown and Brannen, 1970:200)

The craft tradition helps shape the pattern of industrial relations in shipbuilding: the mainspring of industrial action is the particular occupational group rather than shipbuilding workers as a collectivity. As Brown et. al. put it, "the interests of the individual shipbuilding worker have been bound up with those of his trade or occupation" (1972:27). The authors thus warn against interpreting the "militant" industrial relations of British shipbuilding as an expression of class action. Many of the disputes in shipbuilding are created by occupational differences *among* shipbuilding workers -- for example, demarcation disputes between the different unions.[4]

Thus, it is the highly developed nature of craft consciousness in the shipyard that prevents the development of a broader based class consciousness. However, the research does not show the craft occupations to be unambiguously more prone to 'bourgeois' perspectives than those in non-craft occupations. The results from this study do not readily offer a juxtaposition of 'bourgeois' craftsmen and the non-craft 'Proletariat' (though it should be added that their research was not designed as a test of this issue). While skill level, along with age, is an important source of variation in shipbuilding workers' social perspectives, the 'sectionalist' attitudes and behaviour of the craft-workers is directed as much against the encroachments of other craft groups as it is against the non-tradesmen; for this reason, variations in class imagery do not neatly correspond with the skill divide.

A similar kind of ambiguity runs through Form's previously cited cross-cultural study of auto workers. He found, on the one hand, that the skilled craftsmen held more conservative political views (though no details of the index of political ideology are provided), and more likely to oppose "political unionism", than the non-tradesmen. On the other hand, he notes that the "search for the correlates of political ideology was largely unsuccessful, and that beliefs in radical politics, political unionism and militant unionism were not correlated in a consistent pattern" (1976:260-261). Form provides no further commentary on the contradictory pattern of his results.

The Focus of the Research

The concern of the present research is the nature of the relationship between skill-based distinctions within the manual working class and working class consciousness. The research reviewed in the previous section leaves it quite clear that this is a relationship fraught with complexity and inconsistency; indeed, at the theoretical extremes (e.g. the Labour aristocracy and embourgeoisement theses on the one hand, the new working class theorists on the other), contradictory findings are openly predicted.

The state of the literature thus precludes definitive or confident statements about what may be anticipated from an examination of this relationship. However, in the absence of a consistent body of contrary evidence, the shared assumptions of the Marxist theory of the labour aristocracy and non-Marxist accounts of working-class embourgeoisement will be employed as the heuristic starting point.

Accordingly, unskilled workers will be viewed as the principal bearers of Proletarian consciousness. There is now a large body of literature indicating the centrality of instrumental work attitudes to unskilled manual workers' social perspectives (Goldthorpe and Lockwood et al, 1968; Garson, 1973; Beynon, 1973; Beynon and Blackburn, 1972; Inkson, 1977; Rinehart, 1978). The position of those without recognised skills in the class structure in such "that for the great majority of semi-skilled workers necessity dictates and has always dictated a pre-occupation with the "extrinsic" aspects of work -- pay, security and working condition -- when the employment relationship in its totality is considered" (Wedderburn and Crompton, 1972:138).

In contrast to what until recently has been the prevailing interpretation, instrumentalism will be regarded as the outcome of factors associated with the work situation (e.g. working conditions, limited job [illegible]sks). Goldthorpe and Lockwood, et al (1968) for example, depict [illegible]trumentalism as originating outside the work setting; workers with particular social characteristics purposively choose employment situations which offer imbalanced job rewards -- more specifically, high monetary rewards in exchange for unpleasant work. Pre-disposed to tolerate a disagreeable work environment, workers do not experience their job tasks in terms of deprivation and hostility. Other research (Wedderburn and Crompton, 1972; Rinehart, 1978; Mackinnon, 1980; Burawoy, 1979) challenges this interpretation, and offers in its place the view that work instrumentalism is primarily the preserve of non- and semi-skilled workers who, without recognizable qualifications, have only their labour power to sell. This creates a situation loaded with radical possibilities as Westergaard suggests in his often quoted remarks about the fragility of the cash nexus:

> If the prototypical worker is tied to his work only by the size, security and potential growth of his wage-packet -- if his commitment to the job and to everyday co-operation with foremen and managers depends essentially on the fulfillment of such monetary conditions -- his commitment clearly is a brittle one. He may be willing to accept the lack of other interests and satisfactions in the job, for the sake of money. But should the amount and dependency of the money be threatened, his resigned toleration of the lack of discretion, control and 'meaning' attached to the job could no longer be guaranteed. The 'cash nexus' may snap just because it is only a cash nexus -- because it is single stranded; and if it does snap, there is nothing else to bind the worker to acceptance of his situation.
>
> (Westergaard, 1970:120)

Although this characterization of the unskilled manual worker and his latently radical social consciousness derives from studies conducted in a fairly narrow range of industrial environments (notably assembly-line technologies), it is nonetheless a picture that has a high degree of universality.

The content and ideological direction of craftworkers' social consciousness is, by contrast, more subject to both cross-cultural and internal variation (Hamilton, 1965; Stephens, 1979). However, in light of the considerable body of evidence that supports it, a causal sequence that links job involvement with consensual perceptions of industrial life, political and social moderation -- as reflected in voting behaviour, party identification and conceptions of class and class-consciousness -- will be predicted.

That said, it is important to emphasize that the conflicting and indecisive state of the available literature is such that exploration is as much an objective of the present study as hypothesis testing. Hence, although it is formulated around a broadly conceived set of hypotheses -- in good part taken from larger scale surveys -- a no less important objective of the current research is the more qualitative exploration of a topic which, because of differing theoretical perspectives, industrial locations, and national settings, has produced contradictory findings.

The information upon which the research is based was obtained from workers in two plants in the City of Edmonton. Details about the research locale, and the procedures employed, are reserved for the next Chapter.

CHAPTER ONE

FOOTNOTES

1. This is not to suggest that the labour aristocracy concept is non-problematic when its explanatory powers are restricted to class relationships in nineteenth century Britain. In fact, the Marxist theory of the labour aristocracy as an explanation of nineteenth century working-class attitudes has recently become a very contentious issue amongst social historians. This is evidenced by the debate -- carried over several editions of Social History -- inspired by Moorhouse's critical analysis of the concept (1978).

2. The football team analogy has become a staple part of investigations into workers' industrial consciousness (cf. A. Willener, 1964; J. Goldthorpe and D. Lockwood, et al., 1969; D. Wedderburn and R. Crompton, 1972; G. Ingham, 1970; J. Cousins and R. Brown, 1975; S. Hill, 1975). It is designed to reveal whether respondents view employer-employee relations in either conflictual or cooperative terms; the question is usually worded as a variant of the following:

> Here are two opposing views about industry generally. I'd like you to tell me which you agree with more. Some people say that a firm is like a football side -- because teamwork means success and is to everyone's advantage. Others say that teamwork in industry is impossible -- because employers and men are really on opposite sides. Which view do you agree with more? (Wedderburn and Crompton, p. 43).

The prevailing usage of this item has recently been subjected to a more critical appraisal. See Ramsay, 1975 and Davis, 1979:99-104.

3. And, as such, is consistent with the Labour Aristocracy formulation. Nonetheless, the target of the craftsmens' grievances was the employer rather than the encroachments of other, less skilled, workers; and thus, I would argue, a 'solidaristic' response rather than a 'sectionalistic' one.

4. It should be noted that the work situation is not the sole source of variation in skilled and unskilled workers' attitudes and behavior; differences in market capacities are another potential source of variation. In the case of the shipbuilding workers, the fact that some skills and occupations are more shipyard specific than others (the metal trades, when compared with plumbers or electricians, for instance) undermines the homogeneity of workers' social perspectives. Similarly, Wedderburn and Crompton partially account for variations in the industrial consciousness of their chemical workers by reference to differences in market situations. No matter how much responsibility they acquire or well paid they become, semi-skilled workers are tied to a specific employer. The craftsmen, by contrast, have skills that are transferable -- they are not dependent upon a particular employer. Confident that their skills are marketable, and combined with a strong sense of self worth acquired originally during apprenticeship, the craftsmen possess an occupational consciousness that is not found among the semi-skilled workers.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to explore the impact of skill level upon working-class consciousness, a sample of skilled and unskilled workers is needed. The choice of plants that would provide the study with its samples of workers was guided by the knowledge that the skill content of manual occupations varies by industry and technological base (Hobsbawm, 1964; Blauner, 1960, 1964). The search for plants employing substantially different proportions of skilled and unskilled men took me to Airfix Industries, an aircraft repair and maintenance plant, part of the Canadian Aviation and Electronics (C.A.E.) organization; and Glyberforce Canada Limited, the Canadian subsidiary for Corning Glass Works, an American multinational corporation. Glyberforce is a manufacturer of home insulation. Both plants were of roughly the same size; Airfix employs over 400 hourly paid personnel, Glyberforce approximately 350. However, in other respects the two plants were very different.[1]

Airfix Industries

Industries based on a craft technology are not involved in the manufacture of a standardized product, therefore mechanization and rationalization do not predominate: the production process is very much bound up with the skills of the individual craftsman. As a consequence, craft occupations are characterized by the high degree of skill involved, and by the control and autonomy that their holders are able to exercise over the work process: under craft administration, much of the work is planned and carried out by the men on the shop floor, rather than by a remote managerial bureaucracy. Similarly, there is a relative absence of immediate supervision (Stinchcombe, 1959).

There is every indication that the aircraft repair industry is organised around the principles of a craft technology. The maintenance, repair and overhaul of complex aircraft is highly skilled work, from which mechanisation and mass production techniques are largely absent. During the course of the interview schedule, it was frequently pointed out how each aeroplane was unique, and that the problems encountered were extremely varied. The work process is thus very dependent upon the tools and skills of highly trained craftsmen and for this reason is not susceptible to standardization and routinisation.

The aircraft work undertaken at Airfix was basically of two main types. Firstly, there was the repair and maintenance of largely military aircraft, carried out under contracts from the Canadian Government. At the time of the research, the company had a large Government contract to refurbish and overhaul the CF104 starfighter, and the "Hercules" military transport aircraft. Secondly, work was undertaken on a subcontract basis for larger manufacturers. Thus, during the interview period, Airfix was sub-contracted by Lockheed of California to make various parts and components for the Lockheed L1011 passenger jet (e.g. air-conditioned ducts, the floor section, the landing-gear doors).

A very large proportion (over 75%) of the labour force at Airfix were in occupations that management and union alike recognised as skilled trades. Most of the production craftsmen (Aircraft mechanics, fitters, painters, electricians, etc.) were working on particular projects -- for instance, the CF104 or Hercules programmes. The aircraft would be brought in, dismantled and cleaned (by non-tradesmen), and would then pass through a number of different stages in which specific aspects of the repair and overhaul programs were carried out by the various tradesmen.

There was also a smaller number of craftworkers -- principally tool and die makers and machinists -- who did not work directly on the aircraft; they were engaged in the manufacture of aircraft components, and worked in the tool shop. The radio-radar and instrumentation installation work not directly carried out on the aircraft took place on benches in the workshop -- a long, low building. In addition, there were a number of other, smaller departments which carried out more specialised tasks -- such as the few technicians who worked in the non-destructive testing (N.D.T.) laboratory.

All of the occupations in the above sections of the Airfix labour force fall under the broad rubric of production craftwork. However, there were also a smaller number of maintenance craftsmen employed at Airfix. These few electricians, millwrights and carpenters were responsible for ensuring that equipment and machinery around the plant was kept in regular working order. Unlike the production craftsmen, the job skills of the maintenance men were largely independent of aircraft and the aircraft repair industry, their work tasks not contributing directly to either the refurbishing of aircraft or the manufacture of component parts.

The final group of work tasks at Airfix that need to be looked at belong to the small number of non-tradesmen. Not only small in number, the non-trades group is heterogenous in composition, made up of a number of semi-skilled and unskilled job trades. It includes: aircraft cleaners, whose job it is to strip paint from the aircraft before it begins the repair and overhall process; truck-drivers; janitors and cleaners; storesmen and materials handlers.

Glyberforce Canada Limited

The work environment at Glyberforce, the home insulation plant, was shaped by a technological structure that embodies characteristics of both mass production and process technology. Hence, although the bulk of the work force at Glyberforce are not involved in job tasks that require much skill -- at least as conventionally defined -- the technological variations within the plant create very different work situations for difference groups of Glyberforce workers.

The actual production of fiberglass insulation is a technically advanced chemical process, which, like all such processes, takes place without direct human involvement. The job tasks of the men who are responsible for fibreglass production -- the forehearth operators, machine testers, production testers -- revolve around the reading and monitoring of dials and operating switches. In a capital intensive plant such as Glyberforce, these jobs, although having very little traditional skill content, are of fundamental importance. They tend to be occupied by men who, having worked their way up the job ladder, have proven their reliability and commitment to the Company. These jobs therefore comprise the top echelons of the firm's internal labour market. For those without recognisable craft skills (i.e., all but a small number of maintenance men), a job 'upstairs' represents the pinnacle of occupational success. Outside of the maintenance trades, jobs in the control room were the best paid, required least physical effort, and, insofar as they provided an escape from all pervasive noise, heat and dust, offered the best working conditions in the plant. However, as Nichols and Beynon (1977:12) similarly found, control room operatives only comprise a small proportion of the Glyberforce work force. Most of the men enjoyed a far less attractive work environment. The actual bagging, packing, loading and unloading of the fibreglass is carried out manually by men on an assembly line. With a few exceptions -- primarily among the older recruits -- all new employees start their Glyberforce careers as crew men, 'on the line', doing the kind of limited, repetitious tasks that characterize assembly-line work everywhere.

Job advancement at Glyberforce was, as previously indicated, by seniority. Vacancies were filled by bidding, the job going to the bidder with the most seniority. The Glyberforce line of progression took many of the younger men, after their initial stint on the production line, into the warehouse. These men were mainly fork-lift truck drivers, responsible for loading the packaged fibreglass onto trucks leaving the plant. In the course of the interviews with the warehouse men, it soon became apparent that they saw themselves as making up a distinctive group within the plant; one, moreover, that was quite prepared to challenge the managerial authority vested in the foremen and firstline supervisors. It was in this area of the plant that the few instances of casual or informal militancy -- walk-outs, short-term wild-cat strikes -- had taken place. It probably was not coincidental, either, that the few active trade unionists in the Glyberforce sample -- shop stewards -- come from the warehouse.

Glyberforce's dominance of the Canadian home insulation market and the highly costly nature of its machinery made continuous production both profitable and necessary. Apart from the occasional shut-down, when the equipment is overhauled, the plant never closes. The production process at Glyberforce is organised around a continuous 12 hour day and night shift system, which most of the manual labour force work. A fairly complicated system, it requires the men to work 24 hours one week (2 shifts), 60 hours the next (5 shifts), alternating days and nights.

There were some exceptions to this general pattern, however. First of all, there was a small number of men who worked a more conventional eight hour shift schedule of mornings, afternoons, and nights. These men, who tended to be older than the average Glyberforce worker, made up what was known as the nodulater crew. The nodulator is a machine that re-processes discarded or rejected fibreglass. The nodulator crew was responsible for feeding the scraps into the machine. A particularly repetitious and mindless task, it was regarded as being one of the least attractive places to work at Glyberforce. There were also a small number of men who worked straight days. Some were fork lift truck drivers or batch-house loaders; others were referred to as day labourers, and were involved with general clean up duties around the plant. Some of the day labourers that I talked to had eschewed the typical line of progression in the plant. Because of their dislike of shift work they chose only to work days, even though this resulted in the loss of their shift allowance.

Irrespective of differences in their job tasks, all the groups of Glyberforce employees that have been looked at so far share the common characteristic of a lack of formally and universally recognized skills. This includes even the most senior process operators, whose relatively advantaged position within the non-craft sector of the manual working-class is, because of its potentially transitory nature, precarious. This situation is well described by Nichols and Beynon:

> The fear of the packer is that his labour power - his physical strength - will not last through his life as a reasonably priced commodity. Similarly the operator who is paid for being able to operate a particular chemical process, is well aware of the transient nature of his skills. These skills 'cannot be taught' - it takes years to really get to know one of these plants - but equally, by their very nature, they are tied to the continuance of a particular chemical process. And in an industry

> dominated by intense worldwide competition - and therefore unplanned and unco-ordinated technological change - the continuance of any plant cannot be anticipated with any confidence.
>
> (Nichols and Beynon, 1977:23)

The manual labourer and the operator are thus bound together by their lack of skills. By contrast, the situation of the maintenance craftsmen at Glyberforce is very different. All possessing apprentice qualifications, they had the skills and credentials to take them to different employers in different industries, if they so wished. The maintenanace men were not, of course, directly involved in the production of fibreglass. They were primarily electricians and millwrights and were responsible for ensuring that the highly expensive machinery was kept in good working order.

The maintenance men had a fairly complicated work schedule. The electricians worked what was known as a rotating afternoon shift: for three weeks they worked straight days (8-4), while on the fourth they worked an afternoon shift (4-12 p.m.), and were on call throughout the night. The millwrights, on the other hand, worked 6 months on straight days and 6 months on the 12 hour, day and night, shift-system.

This completes the description of the major types of jobs found within the two plants. However, before attention shifts to details of the sampling procedures within each company, comment must be made about the structural location of Airfix and Glyberforce within the overall labour market.

One criticism that might be raised about the sample is that both case-study firms are drawn from the primary sector of the labour market: that although they employ very different proportions of skilled and unskilled workers, both Airfix and Glyberforce would almost certainly be categorized as primary firms by, for instance, the labour market theorists. Both are unionized plants (the Oil, Atomic and Chemical workers' union at Glyberforce, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace workers at Airfix), with the former -- in the view of many of the men that I spoke to -- offering a wage rate for unskilled labour that was hard to equal in other plants in the City. The absence of a firm from the secondary sector of manufacturing industry means that excluded from the sample are representatives of the most disadvantaged members of the working class -- those workers, typically female and immigrant, concentrated in low paying industries without the benefit of union membership.

The consequences of these omissions might be serious if it could be demonstrated that in restricting the analysis to primary firms only, all work and market variation between skilled and unskilled workers has been eliminated. However, such is not the case. Even within the primary sub-sector of the overall labour market, skilled and unskilled workers are differentiated in terms of both and type and degrees of rewards that their job skills and market capacities can secure for them. Skilled and unskilled workers do not share on equal ability to secure balanced job rewards. Whereas skilled men are quite likely to find themselves in work situations that provide both extrinsic and intrinsic job rewards, men without craft qualifications generally only receive high wage employment in return for work that is unpleasant (noisy, dirty, dangerous, etc.), inconvenient (e.g., shift work), or both.

The nature of the job tasks at Glyberforce neatly illustrate this argument. Glyberforce, it bears repeating, is a high technology plant. Nonetheless, with the exception of the maintenance trades, the scope of most job tasks there bear little resemblance to the rosy picture painted by -- among others -- Blauner (1964), of work in a high technology industry. In fact, the content of most Glyberforce jobs corresponds more closely to the altogether more pessimistic assessment offered by Nichols and Beynon (1977). Their study of a continuous process chemical plant revealed the production workers to be engaged in the kind of unskilled labour that those without skills have always engaged in, i.e. heavy manual work, whilst the much vaunted skills of the process operators involved little more than the reading of dials and twiddling of knobs. As they put it: "the packing and bagging operators do very much the same sort of work to be found in traditional assembly lines technically less 'progressive' sectors, and the jobs in the control room, while easier, can hardly be said to have produced a 'new type' of worker" (Nichols and Beynon, 1977:68).[2]

This commentary on working life in a process industry demonstrates the considerable variation that still exists between craft and non-craft jobs, even when those jobs are similarly located within the primary labour market segment. Glyberforce and Airfix, I would argue, reflect the differing industrial milieu of skilled and unskilled workers within the manual labour market.[3]

Attempts were made to assess the market strength of the two firms on the basis of financial statements provided by the 'Financial Post's' corporation service. This source provides information on a company's economic performance (measured by stock returns, operating profits, and so on) over various time periods. Although the information provided is extensive, it only has a limited utility for the present study. With respect to both Glyberforce and Airfix, the published data refer only to the market performance of the parent company -- Corning Glass, and C.A.E. respectively: details on the performance of subsidiaries and divisions is not publicly available. Moreover, the data itself is not easily interpretable by those, such as myself, not well versed in business economics. That said, stock returns (i.e. what an investor in Corning Glass would have made on his investment), strongly suggest that my Glyberforce respondents confident assessment of their company's financial standing is well-founded.

Based on the published information on stock returns and earnings, a similar picture of economic well-being emerges for the C.A.E. organization. What is not provided, however, is separate information on the performance of each of its various divisions. It is not therefore possible to assess how relatively successful its Aviation division (Airfix) is. Moreover, as aviation provides only 5 percent of C.A.E.'s overall operating profit, any market problems experienced by Airfix will be concealed by the high overall level of profitability maintained by the Company (the major source of which is the electronics division of C.A.E.). Indeed, there is reason to believe that the global picture of a highly profitable organization does, in fact, hide a less stable situation at Airfix.

Many of my Airfix respondents volunteered the view that job security was inextricably linked to the duration of contracts. As long as the contracts were forthcoming, the work was secure and plentiful. But, over the long haul, job tenure is not something that can be guaranteed or predicted. Indeed, a number of the men in my Airfix sample had experienced redundancy in the course of working for Airfix or other aircraft companies. This was seen, by and large, as being part and parcel of employment in the aircraft industry.

The Survey

The Interview Schedule

The data on which this study is based is derived from information provided by a total of 110 workers. The interview schedule -- a mix of both structured and open-ended items -- covered topics considered to be central to the theoretical predicts of the study: workers' perceptions of their immediate job tasks, attitudes towards management, their more generalized industrial ideologies, political attitudes, and finally, their perceptions of class and the class structure. The structure and content of the questionnaire was developed in the course of a series of interviews that also functioned as a pre-test of the final instrument. A copy of the questionnaire is to be found in the appendix, although more detailed information, regarding the relevant questions -- their purpose and framing, etc. -- will be introduced as the findings are presented.

The bulk of the information to be presented in the following four chapters was gained through interviews carried out between July 1979 and January 1980.[4] With two exceptions, interviews took place in respondents' homes. One man, of his volition, chose to be interviewed on the university campus, whilst another volunteered to be interviewed in my home. The usual procedure in the interview situation was to present the questions in accordance with the sequential format of the questionnaire. However, in the event of a respondent spontaneously bringing up a topic relevant to the interview, this was taken as an opportunity to probe an individual's feelings on the matter. In the vast majority of cases, the interviews were, with the respondents permission, tape-recorded. Coupled wiht a questionnaire that contained many open-ended items and opportunities for probing more deeply into respondents' feelings about an issue, the tape-recorder facilitated the collecting of quite detailed information on a range of issues pertaining to working-class consciousness. Hence, although the study is based on a small sample, the limitations that this imposes upon the research is somewhat offset by the use of what were quite frequently in-depth interviews, taking anywhere up to 2 hours to conduct.

The Sample

The original intent was to get a sample of about fifty workers from each factory, the sub-sample of skilled craftsmen coming mainly from Airfix, the bulk of the unskilled men being drawn from Glyberforce.

The sampling frame was based on lists, provided with the permission of management and unions in both companies, containing the names, addresses, telephone numbers and occupational classifications of all hourly paid personnel in each plant. Excluded from the sampling frame were a small number of students, females, and two men whose spoken English was not sufficiently adequate to provide a satisfactory interview. At Airfix, the work force was stratified into craft and non-craft categories, and then sampled from each group using -- because of the substantial imbalance in their numbers -- a different sampling fraction. At Glyberforce, the sample of unskilled workers was drawn from all the major sections of the plant. Also sampled were a smaller number of the skilled maintenance men. Details of the occupational composition of the sample is provided in Table I.

TABLE 1

The Occupational Composition of the Glyberforce and Airfix Samples

GLYBERFORCE		AIRFIX	
Skilled	Unskilled	Skilled	Unskilled
6 Millwrights	1 Furnance Forehearth Operator	6 Aircraft Mechanics	4 Storesmen
3 Electricians	1 Production Tester	4 Aircraft Electricians	1 Storesman/Materials Handler
1 Welder	3 Facing Attendants	4 Aircraft Painters	2 Janitors
1 Mechanic	1 Materials Attendant	2 Aircraft Technicians	1 Aircraft Clearer
Total 11	3 Tally Packers	5 Sheetmetal Mechanics	1 Truck Driver
	9 Packers	1 Sheetmatal Fabricator	1 Cable Worker
	9 Forklift Truck Drivers (Warehouse)	4 Electronic Technicians	1 Plastics Production Worker
	3 Crewmen (12 hour shift)	2 Avionic Technicians	
	1 Batch house unloader	2 General Machinists	
	4 Nodulating Crew (8 hour shift)	1 Instrument Technician	Total 11
	1 Day Driver	1 Radio-Radar Technician	
	4 Day Labours	1 Hydraulic Mechanic	
	Total 40	2 Run-up Mechanics	
		1 N.D.T. Technician	
		2 Special Processes Department Mechanics	
		1 Plastics Mechanic	
		1 Avionic Inspector	
		1 Aircraft Inspector	
		1 Quality Control Inspector	
		1 Maintenance Electrician	
		1 Millright	
		2 Carpenters	
		2 Toolmakers	
		Total 48	

Evaluation of the Sample

In the literature, it is possible to identify two schools of thought regarding the determination of non-response in social surveys. Firstly, it can be estimated on the basis of those individuals who, having been selected to participate in the study, decline to participate for whatever reason. According to the precepts of this approach, calculations of non-response include not only successfully contacted potential respondents who subsequently decline an interview, but also those originally selected but not contacted because, for example, they have moved away.

Applying these rules for computing non-response rates to the present study, the overall response rate at Airfix is 57 percent and 68 percent at Glyberforce.

These figures are not particularly impressive, and must raise doubts about the representativeness of the two sub-samples. However, the largest part of the non-response is made up, not of those who refused to be interviewed, or fill-out the mail questionnaire, but of men who simply could not be contacted because, firstly, they did not live at the address supplied by their employer, and secondly, despite repeated efforts, attempts to trace the change of address and/or telephone number proved fruitless.[5] Problems of this sort have prompted some methodologists to recommend that non-contacts be excluded from calculations of non-response (Babbie, 1973:165; Bailey, 1978:154). As Babbie puts it, "the response rate is really a measure of the researchers's success in persuading sample members to participate, and he does not count against himself those whom he could not even contact" (Babbie, 1973:165).

If these guidelines are adopted, and estimates of non-response exclude those men originally selected, but not contacted -- for the reasons given -- then the altogether more satisfactory response rates of 70 percent at Airfix and 78 percent at Glyberforce are obtained. The reader will be left to make up his/her own mind as to which of these viewpoints offers the most convincing interpretation of non-response.[6]

However, what can be said with rather more certainty is that the inability to trace the non-contacts almost certainly biases the sample in the direction of the less mobile and probably more stable manual workers. And, indeed, other information provided informally by management sources and comments by respondents indicated that Glyberforce -- in particular -- had a severe problem with labour turnover and absenteeism.

For a number of reasons, the sample of non-skilled men at Airfix is not a very satisfactory one. First of all, the small number of non-craftsmen in the plant were harder to contact and more likely to have been no longer employed at the company than the men in the other samples. Secondly, more of the information from this group was supplied by a shortened postal questionnaire than among the other groups (only 8 of the 11 men in this sample were actually interviewed).

Indeed, in various parts of the analysis, their small numbers and the more limited range of questions answered, made it every difficult to draw reliable conclusions regarding the group attitudes of the unskilled aircraft workers. Thirdly, the aim of obtaining a sample of approximately 10 non-tradesmen from Airfix resulted in selecting for interview storesmen and material handlers who, although classified as non-tradesmen, nonetheless occupy jobs that on a variety of criteria -- wages, working conditions, prestige, physical effort -- are better than the majority of those found in the non-craft labour market. Finally, one of the non-trade sample had, in fact, spent most of his working life as a skilled tradesman. Now employed as a storesman, he had worked for the Company for over 30 years as an aircraft mechanic. Not wishing to retire at 65, he had been allowed to stay on with the Company as a storesman. It was clear from his responses that his whole orientation towards work and the Company was shaped by his years as a craftsman rather than his shorter tenure as a storesman. In sum, my feeling is that the sample of non-craftsmen at Airfix is biased towards the more stable, relatively advantaged unskilled job holders at Airfix.

Social Characteristics of the Two Workforces

In this next section, some of the pertinent details about the background characteristics of the men in the sample are presented.

The first background variable to be looked at is age. The significance of age is that, in the words of two other researchers, "it is related to so many aspects of a person's experience...it indicates his generation and the period he has lived through. Thus we can hardly expect those who have lived through two world wars and the depression to view their employment in the same light as young workers born after 1945" (Beynon and Blackburn, 1972:25). More specifically, although the explanation for the finding varies, many studies (e.g. Kornhauser, 1965) have demonstrated that older men are more likely than younger ones to report satisfaction in and with jobs. Similarly, there is a well established connection between age and conservatism. Thus age has a potential bearing upon the pattern of results, and for this reason, details should be provided of the age structure of the sample. This information is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Age Distribution of the Sample

	SKILLED				UNSKILLED			
	Glyberforce		Airfix		Glyberforce		Airfix	
Under 21	-		-		7	64%	-	
21-30	3	73%	8		18		2	
31-40	5		5		7		2	
41-54	2		20	73%	7		1	55%
55-65	1		15		1		5	
TOTAL	11		48		40		11	

It is quite evident from this table that the two most prominent features of the age composition of the sample is the relative youth of the unskilled Glyberforce men and the high average age of the skilled aircraft workers: 64% of the former group are between the ages of 18 and 30 (18 being the minimum age for working at Glyberforce) whereas 73% of the latter group are between the ages of 41 and 65. This group is also appreciably older than their craft counterparts at Glyberforce, the bulk (73%) of whom are under 40. The unskilled workers at Airfix share the same high average age as their skilled colleagues, 6 of the 11 being between 41 and 65. Focusing particularly upon the skilled aircraft workers and unskilled men at Glyberforce it is evident that the two groups are differentiated not only in terms of the kind of skills that they have at their disposal but also with respect to their ages; in other words, there is a direct relationship between age and position in the occupational hierarchy.

Other background factors are also fairly directly connected to age, the most important of which is probably marital status and family situation. Previous research (Goldthorpe et al, 1968; Beynon and Blackburn, 1972, for instance) has indicated that, for example, young single males and older married men, with family responsibilities and a mortgage to pay off, are unlikely to view work, employers and industrial life in general in the same way. In light of the possibility that stage in the life cycle operates as a source of variation in industrial attitudes, Table 3 presents the appropriate details about the family backgrounds of the men in the sample.

As Table 3 indicates, although the majority of men in each of the four groups are married, the smallest proportion of married men are found among the younger unskilled Glyberforce workers. Again, although a similar proportion of skilled married men at Airfix and unskilled married men at Glyberforce have no dependent children, a major difference between the two groups is that whereas many of the older aircraftsmen have children who have grown up and left home (and in many cases are now parents themselves), the younger men at Glyberforce have yet to start their families.

Other differences between the groups that make up the sample are revealed when length of service is examined. Previous research (e.g., Ingham, 1970:23) has used both labour turnover and 'stability rate' --

Table 3

Family Background

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	Glyberforce	Airfix	Glyberforce	Airfix
Single	-	9(4)	38(15)	22(2)*[4]
Married:				
No Dependent Children	1	42(18)	26(10)*[2]	44(4)
One Dependent Child	1	19(8)	18(7)*[3]	22(2)*[5]
Two Dependent Children	78(7)*[1]	16(7)	15(6)	11(1)
Over Two Dependent Children	-	9(4)	1(3)	-
Total	9	43	39	9
Marital Status Unknown	2	5	1	2

*1 Includes one man who is divorced
*2 Includes 3 men living common-law
*3 Includes one man living common-law
*4 Includes one widower
*5 Includes one widower

that is, proportion of long-service workers (over 10 years) employed by a company -- as indicators of commitment or attachment to an employer. On these grounds, and as Table 4 reveals, the preliminary indication is that the workers at Airfix, particularly the skilled ones, have a much greater commitment to their firm than, in particular, do the unskilled men at Glyberforce. What is particularly striking about the skilled aircraft workers is the number that have been with the Company for 10 or more years - 46%. Likewise, 5 of the 11 (45%) of the unskilled workers at Airfix had been with the Company for ten or more years.

Table 4

Length of Service by Company and Skill Level

	SKILLED			UNSKILLED			
	Glyberforce	Airfix		Glyberforce		Airfix	
Under 6 months	-	3		2	25%	-	
6 months - 12 months	2	5		8		1	
1 year - 18 months	-	5		7	30%	-	
18 months - 2 years	3	1		5		1	
2 - 3 years	1	3		2		1	
3 - 5 years	1	4		8		2	
5 - 10 years	3	5		4		1	
10 years +	1	22	46%	4		5	45%
TOTAL	11	28		40		11	

On the other hand, most of the Glyberforce workers had been with their company for a relatively short period of time -- 10 (25%) for less than a year, a further 12 (30%) for less than 2 years. The maintenanace men at Glyberforce had been with the company, on average, for a longer period of time than their unskilled counterparts, but -- and this is hardly surprising given their lower average age -- did not match the Airfix craftsmen in terms of length of employment with their company.

Finally, turning to the ethnic background of the sample, Table 5 indicates that although the majority of workers in each of the four groups were born in Canada, the percentage who are Canadian born varies between the craft and non-craftsmen in both plants. More specifically, a larger proportion of the unskilled than skilled men are Canadian born; indeed, a sizeable minority (45% at Glyberforce, 44% at Airfix) of the craftsmen were born outside of Canada.

Table 5

Country of Birth by Company and Skill Level

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	Glyberforce	Airfix	Glyberforce	Airfix
Canadian Born	55%	56%	75%	73%
	Total N 6	Total N 27	Total N 30	Total N 8
Non Canadian Born	45%	44%	25%	27%
-Czechoslavakia	1			
-Germany	2	-Denmark 1	-China 3	-Poland 1
-U.K.	1	-Eire 1	-India 1	-U.K. 2
-Yugoslavia	1	-Germany 3	-Iraq 1	
	Total N 5	-Phillippines 2	-Malta 1	
		-Poland 4	-Mexico 1	
		-Portugal 1	-Trindad 1	
		-Singapore 1	-U.K. 1	
		-U.K. 6	-Poland 1	
		-U.S. 1	Total N 10	
		-Yugoslavia 1		
		Total N 21		

Conclusion

The original intention was to present the interview findings as a comparison between the skilled and unskilled workers. However, the preceeding description of the sample has made it quite clear that there are differences -- sometimes quite substantial -- in background characteristics, not only between the craft and non-craft samples, but also within them. For this reason, the discussion of the interview findings is conducted in terms of similarities and differences between the four occupational groups (skilled and unskilled men at Airfix, skilled and unskilled men at Glyberforce), rather than as a comparison between all the unskilled workers and all the craftsmen. Dichotomised comparisons and broader generalizations about the skilled and unskilled workers in the sample as a whole are introduced into the argument in those instances where distinctive group characteristics are uncovered. A similar procedure is adopted on those occasions where the pattern of variation in response reflects plant-based differences.

It was decided not to apply tests of significance or measures of association to the statistical analysis. There was a two-fold reason for this. Firstly, this is an exploratory and, in part, descriptive study. Secondly, applying these statistical procedures to such a small sample imbues the findings, and conclusions drawn from them, with a spurious validity (cf. Roberts et al 1977:16).[7]

The results will be presented in the following sequence. in the next chapter, variations in craft and non-craftsmens' work attitudes will be examined. Chapter four deals with workers' evaluations of their immediate employer and their broader perceptions of industrial life. The political dimensions of workers' social consciousness is the focus of Chapter five. The last topic for empirical consideration is workers' perceptions of class. This is the subject matter of Chapter seven. In the concluding Chapter, the various elements of the empirical investigations are brought together, and the whole question of structural differentiations within the manual working class reconsidered.

CHAPTER TWO

FOOTNOTES

1. These are not the real names of the two companies.

2. This, of course, is the crucial element in Blauner's thesis: he views the new automated process technology as producing a new breed of worker who is normatively integrated into his industrial enterprise.

3. The refinement offered by Edwards (1979) to the basic labour market postulate of primary and secondary segments emphasises the significance of skill-based variations within the primary market. Secondary, subordinate primary and independent primary markets, each with typical job tasks and roles, are now delineated. Subordinate primary and independent primary jobs are distinguishable in terms of the degree of skill involved, the learning period, and the amount of initiative and autonomy permitted. Whereas subordinate primary jobs are typically semi-skilled, independent primary jobs include craft work.

4. Eleven men, in lieu of a personal interview, filled out, in the form of a mailed questionnaire, a shortened version of the interview schedule. Most had originally refused to be interviewed but had, prompted by a follow-up letter, agreed to fill-out the questionnaire. Not all were initial non-respondents, though. With two men, it was impossible -- despite repeated phone calls -- to set up a mutually convenient interview time. They agreed to complete the mail-out questionnaire, however. Another man lived 80 miles from the City on an acreage. Because of the prevailing weather conditions -- it was near the beginning of winter -- the advantages of a personal interview diminished; a postal questionnaire was completed instead. Finally, there was one man who, although quite willing to be interviewed, felt reluctant, because of an alcoholic room-mate -- to have the interview conducted in his apartment. Once again, the practical solution was to mail out a questionnaire -- the full version this time -- which was duly completed.

5. Some of these efforts -- the repeated 'phoning of directory assistance, the visiting of homes without telephone numbers, the remailing of returned letters -- apart from being very time consuming, had the effect of making me feel like a private detective, or, worse, the representative of a Collecting Agency.

6. There is, of course, a third position on this issue. If the non-contact is no longer part of the population under study -- in this case, no longer in the employ of the firm in question -- then there is no reason to count the non-contact as a non-respondent. Although one Airfix interviewe did spontaneously reveal that one of my non-contacts had, in fact, left the company to take up a job with C.P. Air in Vancouver, I unfortunately, had no way of knowing how typical this situation was of other instances of non-contact.

7. The regression analysis of workers' industrial consciousness presented in Chapter four is the one exception to this principle.

CHAPTER THREE

WORKERS AND THEIR JOBS

The theoretical perspective laid out in the opening chapter is predicated on the assumption that the consequences of differences in skill level in the working-class are initially evidenced in the work situation. Accordingly, this chapter is concerned with examining those features of craft and non-craft jobs which can be expected to produce feelings of either fulfillment or deprivation. The first part of the analysis focuses upon job content, the second part looks at the nature and degree of workers' involvements with their jobs, the third part examines workers' expectations of work, and the final part is concerned with attitudes towards pay.

Characteristics of the Job

Previous research in this area, although not voluminous, has provided some clues as to which specific attributes of a job may effect attitudes beyond the workplace. Both Kohn (1969) and Blackburn and Mann (1975) have demonstrated that lack of job autonomy and discretion are salient factors in the development of ideological thinking. Various components of job skill -- such as the ability to determine the pace of work, and the length of the necessary training period -- are similarly found by Blackburn and Mann to be linked to their measure of ideology, as is the physical effort required to carry out job tasks. Guided by these findings, workers in the present sample were asked about the following aspects of their job tasks:

1. The amount of autonomy and discretion that their jobs allowed them.
2. The degree of physical effort required in the job.
3. Perceptions of the skill requirements of the job.

Two items probed workers' perceptions of the degree of autonomy and discretion that their jobs allowed them. First of all, respondents were asked whether their jobs gave them a chance to try out ideas of their own (Table 6).

Quite clearly, the main point of comparison is between the two craft groups and the unskilled Glyberforce workers. The latter group are quite considerably less likely to view their jobs as providing them with opportunities for trying out their own ideas than the skilled workers. It should also be noted that although their numbers are not sufficiently large for much to be made of it, the unskilled men at Airfix more closely resemble the craft workers in their responses than their unskilled counterparts at Glyberforce.

TABLE 6

Opportunity to Try Out Ideas by Company and Skill Level

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Yes	89%	62%	34%	80%
No	-	29	53	20
Sometimes	11	10	13	-
TOTAL N	9	42	38	5

Although some of the skilled Aircraftsmen remarked that stringent safety requirements limited the opportunities for using their own ideas, many (62%) agreed that working with aircraft frequently necessitated a certain degree of technical improvisation, as the following comments testify:

> "Well, I'm always using ideas of my own. I don't get paid for them, mind! (laughter)...I get tanks to test, and pressure test and things like this. You have which will allow you to test

> them...there's all kinds of things...new ideas are cropping up all the time...I have my own ideas a lot." (Aircraft mechanic)
>
> "...I've made special tools...to make a job easier and quicker...You don't have to do this but sometimes it's almost impossible to do unless you do." (Aircraft mechanic)
>
> Quite often we'll have things come in that you can't find the repairs for in what they call the Bible, which is this Dash 3 manual...all it is is a guide to standard repairs and sometimes you find that something comes in that doesn't, isn't included in this. And then you can put in a shop query, requesting engineering assistance. You find quite often - well, our engineers now - the ones I work with anyway - they'll come down and say, "Well, have you got any ideas - what do you want to do?" And generally speaking, we have something in mind that we ought to do, and then we suggest it to the engineer. If he figures it's within standard procedures and it's within safety standards I find that we have a chance to implement some of our own ideas." (Overhaul and Repair mechanic, Airfix)

Amongst the unskilled men at Glyberforce, comments of this kind were rarer. Some even felt that they were actively discouraged from using their ideas; one man, now a talley-driver, concluded bitterly: "There is totally no initiative allowed at that plant; I know, I've tried it , and I got hell when I was on days. I found that out." (The incident referred to involved the respondent, instead of merely cleaning some materials, sorting them out as well: It was his personal attempt at job enlargement. It was an attempt, however, that did not meet with the approval of the foreman;) my responsent continues:

> "...our foreman came down, and reemed us right out, and told us our job was to clear them. Our job was not to sort them -- we were not told to sort them, we were told only to clean them, and unless we were told anything else, we did nothing else. So if you've got an idea of your own, you might as well keep it to yourself you know, and if you don't do the work, they'll kick you anyway. So all you can do there is do what you are told and nothing more."

The responses to the second question concerning job autonomy and discretion again set the unskilled Glyberforce workers apart from the three other groups.

It seems reasonable to suppose that the ability of a worker to determine his own pace of work, independently of the demands of immediate supervision or the constraints of machinery, will be an important source of job satisfaction. In order to further explore this issue, respondents were questioned about the determinants of the speed at which they had to work. The results are presented in Table 7.

TABLE 7

Determinants of Pace of Work by Company and Skill Level

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Controls speed himself	75%	71%	21%	100%
Machinery	13	0	69	0
Other (e.g. Workgroup's Schedule)	0	22	3	0
Varies	13	7	8	0
TOTAL N	8	41	39	8

The majority of craftsmen in both plants, as well as the unskilled men at Airfix, feel that they control the speed at which they work. By contrast, 69% (27) of the unskilled workers at Glyberforce felt that their workpace was determined by the machinery they worked with -- in most cases, the speed of the assembly line.

The physical effort required to carry out job tasks was probed by asking respondents about how they experienced the speed at which they had to work: more specifically, were they required to work at a pace that they felt to be too fast? Table 8 reveals that the answer to this question is generally 'no'.

TABLE 8

Find Pace of Work Too Fast by Company and Skill Level

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Yes	0%	5%	21%	13%
No	67	68	47	50
Depends/Sometimes	33	25	18	38
Too Slow	0	3	13	0
TOTAL N	9	40	38	8

This assessment includes a large proportion of the unskilled Glyberforce men: only 8 of the 39 men (21%) in this group felt that they were required to work at a pace that was unacceptable to them. Since this is the occupational group whose work tasks are most obviously controlled by a machine-based technology, this constitutes a somewhat unexpected finding. It is also worth noting that, once again, the responses of the small number of non-craftsmen at Airfix are more similar to those of the two craft groups than to the unskilled workers at Glyberforce.

A number of the skilled aircraftsmen mentioned that the complicated and expensive nature of the aeroplanes that they worked upon effectively precluded a coercive work pace. Even so, some of them felt that having to meet tight schedules in order to fulfill contract requirements led to an uneven pace of work, and occasionally to what were referred to as 'panic situations'. Both these points are reflected in the comments of one aircraft mechanic. Did he find the pace of his work too fast?

> "Sometimes, yeah; the odd time. But we can't work fast, we have to be careful...sometimes too fast, when the pressure is on...But you cannot work fast on aircraft; it's expensive to make mistakes.

The indication that, particularly in contrast to the young, unskilled workers at Glyberforce, the two groups of craftsmen found their work fulfilling, meaningful, and a genuine source of satisfaction is substantiated by a further question.

A workers's perception of the skill requirements of his job is likely to promote both an emotional involvement in the job, and the development of a distinct occupational identity. In addition, there is evidence to suggest that the skill requirements of a job are related to feelings of job satisfaction (Korpi, 1978:119). On this assumption, workers were asked how long they thought it took to become fully skilled in their jobs (Table 9).

As one would expect, both the maintenance and production craftsmens' jobs demand a substantially longer learning period than those of the unskilled men, particularly at Glyberforce. Whereas the bulk (82%) of those unskilled workers felt that whatever skills their jobs required could be learnt within a 3 month period at most, the majority of craftsmen in both companies estimated that, at a bare minimum, their occupational skills required between 4 and 6 years of learning and practice. Some of the differences between the various groups with regard to skill requirements are reflected in the following comments:

> "You never finish learning. Everytime you pick up something...pretty well everyday you pick up something new. It's a continuous learning operation; 'cos the day you think you know it all, you may as well quit." (Glyberforce maintenance electrician).

TABLE 9

Perception of the Skill Requirement of the Job by Company and Skill Level

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Less than 2 weeks	0%	2%	11%	34%
2 - 5 weeks	0	0	0	17
1 - 3 weeks	9	2	11	31
4 - 12 weeks	0	7	11	9
1 - 3 years	0	18	44	6
4 - 6 years	18	38	11	0
6 years +	18	27		0
"You are always learning"	55	9	11	3
TOTAL N	11	45	9	35

> "Well, you see, we have about 40 different instruments. And each instrument demands extra - how shall we say? - skill. Because we do one instrument that's fine, we get to know after a year. Each instrument is different, you see: it's always something else wrong.
>
> But if you have 40 different instruments, it takes, well, I would say, about 10, 15 years time, experience, you know."
>
> (Instrument technician, Airfix)

> "To become fully skilled at all lines of it, a person would have to work in a variety of locations or a variety of plants, so as you get the variety of conditions. You can't work in one place continuously and become an all round worker or tradesman no matter what trade you are in. You have to go around to the different places because you meet different obstacles, different challenges, and you learn different things. I feel I've learnt a lot here at Airfix; and I learnt a lot at my first job at Stelco...you do learn different things. Like, repair of machinery. That requires a kind of specialist person in itself because you have to, as well as know electrical, you have to be able to reason out what causes the problems and reason out how to fix it. That's the difference

> between a good maintenance man and a poor one: the ability to reason, to find out what is wrong and how to fix it." (Maintenance electrician, Airfix)
>
> "Fully skilled? Forever...you are always learning." (Hydraulic mechanic, Airfix)

These expressions of pride in a job that involves a life-time of learning can be contrasted with the sardonic comments of the unskilled Glyberforce workers with regard to their jobs:

> "Anybody off the street could throw fibreglass onto a conveyor belt...(laughs) There's no skill to it, really." (Member of the nodulator crew, aged 52).
>
> "Glyberforce?...it doesn't take much to learn...a day! (laughs) No, it takes a little longer - 3 days. You learn as you go along -- You are always doing something new there, but nothing really demanding". (Crewman, aged 19)
>
> "You don't need any tests up there. For that job all you need is a strong back and a weak head." (Member of the nodulator crew, aged 47)

Involvement with the Job

The responses to this first set of questions indicate that in terms of job control and discretion, the important differences lie between the two craft groups on the one hand and the unskilled Glyberforce workers on the other. As anticipated, the skilled men are likely to feel that their jobs permit a degree of control and discretion largely denied the unskilled Glyberforce workers. With some important exceptions, responses to the second set of questions conform to the same basic pattern. This time the focus is upon the nature and degree of involvement that workers have with their jobs. The interview questions addressed the following issues:

1. Preference for previous job
2. Overall evaluation of the job
3. Sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the job.

The identification the respondents have with their current job was explored by a question asking whether or not they had preferred some previous employment. The findings (Table 10) indicate that the workers both most and least satisfied with their present jobs come from Glyberforce. The Glyberforce maintenance men show the strongest preference for their current job over previous ones (67%), while their unskilled counterparts are the group most likely to have preferred a previous job (50%). The skilled craftsmen at Airfix offer a more balanced assessment of their jobs, being evenly split as to wehther or not a previous job had been preferred. There did not seem to be any distinctive pattern of response to this item from the seven non-tradesmen at Airfix.

TABLE 10

Preference for Previous Job by Company and Skill Level

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Preferred some previous employment	11%	41%	50%	43%
Did not prefer any previous employment	67	39	36	29
About the same/ Don't know	22	29	14	29
TOTAL N	9	41	36	7

The second question in this section dealt directly with respondents liking for their jobs. Previous research has detailed the difficulties entailed in using items of this sort. In most cases, the relevant item has probed workers' feelings of job satisfaction. The results from a number of studies suggest that this question tends to produce affirmative responses. Blauner (1960) has suggested that in a culture that equates a man's identity and psychological well-being with a feeling of contentment in his job, a rejection of the worthwhileness of one's job is to invite an attack upon an individual's self-esteem: hence a positive assessment of one's job becomes the culturally acceptable answer. A different kind of explanation has been offered by Stewart and Blackburn (1975). They argue that studies of work attitudes that employ the concept of job satisfaction do so on the assumption that job satisfaction has a shared, universal frame of reference. The problem with this formulation is that:

> "If satisfaction means the same for all persons who express it (as almost every study of job satisfaction has assumed), then within a system of inequalities where a large majority of people at all positions are satisfied, not all judgements can be made within the same frame of reference (Stewart and Blackburn, 1975:496).

In order to circumvent this problem, it becomes necessary in Stewart and Blackburn's view, to broaden the frame of reference by which workers' evaluate their jobs. This involves distinguishing between 'liking' and 'satisfaction', for the former rests upon a much wider frame of reference than the latter. As they put it, 'while satisfaction is expressed within a framework of what is possible, liking is expressed within a framework of what is desirable" (1975:503). Consistent with this argument, the question asked of respondents in the present study was "overall, taking everything into account, how much would you say you like your present job?" (Table 11).

TABLE 11

Liking of Present Job by Company and Skill Level

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Very much	45%	29%	13%	27%
Quite a lot	55	56	47	45
Not very much	0	15	32	9
Not at all	0	0	8	18
TOTAL N	11	48	38	11

My suspicion is that the reformulation of the question notwithstanding these responses still generally overstate the degree to which work is experienced positively. Even so, it is clear that there is the expected variation in the pattern of response to the question. The group who gave the most positive expression of approval of their jobs were the Glyberforce maintenance men, followed by both the craft and non-craft groups at Airfix. Conversely, the group least disposed to like their work were the unskilled men from Glyberforce.

In order to test for its possible effects in the present study, age was operationalised as a dichotomous variable, the divide being drawn at 30 years of age. It was found to have a slight, though not significant influence upon workers' liking for their jobs. On the one hand, the men who most liked their jobs were the older craftsmen; on the other, those who liked their jobs the least were the young, unskilled Glyberforce workers. But overall, skill level was a much more important determinant of job liking than was age. Likewise, there was no significant variation, holding skill level constant, between Canadian and non-Canadian born workers with regard to the liking of jobs.

Sources of Work Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

The liking item does not, of course, indicate what it is about a job that a worker finds rewarding or, conversely, unrewarding and dissatisfying. A closer examination of the satisfying and dissatisfying elements of workers' jobs is the concern of the next three questions.

A now familiar formulation in industrial sociology is the conceptualisation of the rewards manual workers get from their jobs as being of two main types, 'extrinsic', or 'instrumental', and 'intrinsic' (Goldthorpe et al, 1968). Intrinsic rewards are those that individuals see themselves getting from actually doing the job. By contrast, instrumental rewards do not derive directly from the content or execution of job tasks; rather, they focus upon economic returns -- high wages and job security, for instance. 'Instrumentalism', in turn, is regarded as the defining characteristic of contemporary working-class consciousness although, as suggested in the opening chapter, there are competing interpretations as to what the consequences of an 'instrumentally' motivated working-class are for the maintenance of social stability.

Following the direction taken by previous research, each respondent was asked an open-ended question in the course of the interview about those aspects of his present job he liked the best; up to three responses per person were coded. The results are presented in Table 12.

TABLE 12

Things Liked Best About Present Job by Company and Skill Level*

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Pay and benefits	33%	12%	51%	13%
An interesting and varied job	78	55	10	25
Responsibility and autonomy	44	12	3	0
Good workmates/ friendly atmosphere	33	31	28	38 13
TOTAL N	9	42	39	8

*More than one answer could be given so the answers may total to more than 100%.

Two important findings emerge from the responses to this item. The first underscores the differences between the skilled tradesmen in both companies and the unskilled workers at Glyberforce. Among the latter group, easily the most valued aspect of their present employment was the money: 51% of them thought that the pay and benefits were the best feature of their jobs. The second and only other aspect of their work situation that seemed to be valued was work-based social relationships -- 28% of the men mentioned good workmates as a positive part of the job.

By contrast, the intrinsic rewards of the job itself predominate in the responses of the two craft groups. Among the small number of Glyberforce tradesmen, 78% mentioned the nature of the work as being the main source of reward.

The skilled craftsmen at Airfix derive similar intrinsic satisfactions from their work. Once again, it is the nature of the work itself -- in this case the interest, challenge, fascination, etc. of working with aircraft -- which is the prime source of satisfaction. Mention should be made of the small number of nontradesmen at the Aircraft repair plant. Good workmates was the only feature of the job that received a consistent positive reference: it was mentioned by three of the eight men (38%) in this sub-sample.

Some of the differences between the two groups of craft workers and the unskilled men at Glyberforce are captured in the following statements:

> "The work involved especially. I like the work that I do. It's something that you can get involved in. Glyberforce gives you a free hand, which is nice. They let you make your own decisions. And as far as the forehearth instrument goes, it's kind of left up to me, you know, and that's nice. (Glyberforce maintenance electrician)

> "Well, I guess I would say working on shift the way I am -- the kind of independence and freedom we have to repair the equipment to the best of our ability. Again, it sort of presents a challenge, when you walk up to a piece of equipment -- it's all busted to pieces; and you've got to do it quickly because quite often its a piece of urgent equipment; and you have no one telling you how you should fix it. Our maintenance supervisor isn't with us, so it's up to us to make decisions -- what we need, and how we do it, and how we go about doing it most efficiently. So I would say that would be one of the things I like. (Glyberforce millwright)

> "The fulfillment when I do an instrument, a difficult instrument, you see, and it gives me more problems than the other one; and I can fix the problems, satisfied that that instrument is good, and that the pilot can rely upon it. That's my satisfaction. (Instrument technician, Airfix)

A rather more comprehensive assessment is offered by this aircraft mechanic who had returned to aircraft repair work after an unsatisfying, though highly paid stint, as a projectionist in a local movie theatre:

> "It's hard to explain. I just went back because I wanted to work on aeroplanes, really and the atmosphere is pretty good there. It's a bit like being in the airforce...I know a lot of people

> there that I used to know before. The working conditions are pretty good. It's a challenge, you know; you do something, and you get it working...You always start, it's in pieces on the ground, eh?

By contrast this is how the Glyberforce workers view their jobs:

> J.R.T.: What are some of the things you like best about your present job?
> Respondent: (19 year old Fork-lift truck driver). Nothing (laughs).
> J.R.T.: There's nothing about it that you like at all?
> Respondent: Money, that's about it.

This time the respondent is a 23 year old Talleydriver:

> "The people I work with are all my own age, which is one good thing. Really, that's about all it's got going for it. (pause). And the money. I'm making $8.50 an hour...other than that, I can't say too much for the job.
>
> Respondent: (35 year old facing attendent). Besides money?
> J.R.T.: Including money.
> Respondent: Well, money is the main thing. There are lots of things that can be improved in that place (to make) it more enjoyable to go to.

This 26 year old packer is quite explicit about the extrinsic nature of his job rewards:

> "I like the time-off. The pay is alright. That's why everybody works, really, I think. I like some of the people I work with, they make it enjoyable and...I like working there -- I mean it's an experience. But I don't like anything about working at Glyberforce (laughs). They are not really related to the job itself."

A similar sentiment is expressed by a 38 year old Talley-Packer:

> "...one of the things I enjoy is the people I work with. The job is a job, that's all it is. It's no different from any other one. I probably enjoy it, 'cos I know it very well.

Probably the clearest expression of instrumentalism is provided by a 28 year old Fork lift truck driver, who explicitly distinguishes between those factors that lead to fulfillment in a job -- and which Glyberforce cannot provide -- and those factors that keep him working at Glyberforce. The best things about his job?:

> "That's a hard question. I don't know there's anything I like best about it -- I'm giving you the reasons why I work there.
> J.R.T.: What are the reasons that you work there?
> Well, job security...comparative wage scale. Like, it's a union scale. It's comparative at least to the other plants that are around.

The second major finding uncovered by this question hints at differences between the two craft groups. The indication is that the skilled aircraftsmen are less enamoured with the intrinsic benefits of their jobs than their craft counterparts at Glyberforce. First of all, they are less inclined than the maintenance men to cite an interesting and varied job as a best feature of their employment situation (55% against 78%). Secondly, responsibility and autonomy -- closely related to interest and variety as intrinsic job elements -- are cited by 44% of the Glyberforce maintenance men but only 12% of the skilled aircraft workers.

Clearly there is something about the skilled aircraft workers' work environment that dampens their enthusiasm for their job tasks that is absent from the Glyberforce maintenance craftsmens' work situation. What this might be is one of the concerns of the next section, where the focus is upon respondents' perceptions of the negative features of their jobs. This issue was probed by the question "what are some of the things you like least about your present job?" Up to 3 answers were coded, and are presented in Table 13.

TABLE 13

Things Liked Least About Present Job by Company and Skill Level*

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Working conditions	44%	14%	56%	38%
Management	0	26	8	0
Supervision	0	2	18	0
Pressure/uneven nature of work	11	12	0	38
Other	33	43	38	13
Nothing bad	11	14	5	25
OK/Nothing in particular	11	12	10	13
TOTAL N	9	42	39	8

* More than one answer could be given so the answers may total to more than 100%.

Overall, the physical environment of work emerges as the most significant source of grievance among the unskilled men at Glyberforce: the poor working conditions -- principally, the heat in summer, the cold in winter, and persistent dust which caused severe itching -- being mentioned by 56% of them. Similarly, working conditions are the only feature of the Glyberforce maintenance mens' work environment to be regularly cited as a source of grievance (44%).

The picture at Airfix Industries was slightly different. Among the skilled craftsmen, the prime source of dissatisfaction was management, followed by working conditions (mentioned by 26% and 14% respondents, respectively). Their criticisms of management were fairly wide ranging, but included management's inability to organize the work process adequately; the difficulty in getting the right tools for a given job; the selection of the wrong men for supervisory positions, and the hiring of men for skilled position who did not have the requisite skills and experience (in the view of the management critics).

The responses to this question dispense with the view that there is any straightforward symmetrical relationship between workers' feelings about their jobs, and perceptions of their employers. The fairly high levels of job involvement expressed by the skilled aircraftsmen do not preclude sharp, and often bitter, condemnations of managerial inefficiency. The flavour of some of these criticisms is captured in the following quotations. Here is a 39 year old Hydraulics mechanic, whose specific complaint is with management's inept organization of the work:

> The organization: it's not organized. The planning department, which is supposed to do things, and the estimating department which is supposed to do things -- they always seem to come to the guys on the floor, and ask him, instead of them trying to learn themselves. This is what it seems like to us anyways. Maybe they do try, but maybe they don't know how to go about it. Or something. Or maybe they are being pushed to get an answer quick, and they haven't got time to learn, to ask, so they come down to the guy on the floor. After you have been asked the same question 20 times by 15 different people, it gets a little monotonous. You're there, you are supposed to do your work, and everything is supposed to be there for you to put out the product. But if you have to chase around for parts and answer questions for people, and go show them this, where this is - it gets a little monotonous."

This 41 year old electronics technician had a similar beef:

> "Well, poor ability to get organized so that production moves. Here, you do a job and you know you can get it done if you get something. But you are dependent upon somembody else: you are dependent upon your crew-chief, you are dependent upon the 'experts' ...you need to just get an item, which is just so easy, and you can't."

The following 42 year old aircraft mechanic is more specific about attributing the blame for poor organization to management:

> "The management. It's not that they are hard to work for, but somewhere in the Head Shed the planning isn't as good as it should be."

These sentiments are echoed more vigorously by this 51 year old aircraft electrician:

> "Disorganization, primarily. From above, not in the job I'm doing, of course, because at the present time...I'm just an electrician. I'm out there slapping wrenches. But the disorganization comes from our tie and shirt people.
> J.R.T.: And they are the guys who organise your work?
> (Respondent interrupts:) Disorganize it...These are people who have never taken a contract of this nature. Not as this complex and they're finding themselves in all kinds of bitches and binds. Of course, it follows down, morale wise, right down to the bottom: panic, acute and utter panic."

This 52 year old instrument technician's complaints were slightly different. He felt that management did not pick competent people for supervisory positions:

> "The management. Because it changes so much, you see. If you put a foreman on top of me, he should know, he should direct me. But he can't, I have to direct him, so...and it aggrivates me."

The following respondent -- a 23 year old aircraft electrician -- conceived management's organizational problems in terms of its hiring policies, particularly its recruitment of 'dilutees':

> "Unorganization (laughs). Very unorganized. They have a lot of unskilled people in there doing wrong jobs. Like, they are trained for something else -- they are trained for something completely different from what they are actually doing. And, therefore, you are getting unorganization because you've got to stand there and show the guy how to do it, or he's got to do it three or four times over."

And finally, here is a 25 year old Plastics mechanic:

> "...the odd hassles you get from upstairs, from management. And you have to justify a lot of things that you do...They don't seem really to know what's going on half of the time, 'cos they're not down there as much as we are, you know. Whenever there is a problem, they think they're right even though they don't exactly know what the problem is. See, we know, we're right down there, we're close to the problem...Being hassled, I think that's the only thing I really dislike about the company. And there are a lot of hassles there."

The broad theme that links this litany of complaints is that managerial incompetence undermines the degree of control that the skilled craftsmen have over their part of the work process. The Airfix craftsmen viewed, I would argue, management as a stumbling block to the proper execution of their own job tasks. In other words, the critical stance adopted by them towards management was inspired, not by their alienation from work but, paradoxically, because of their very close identification with it.

The differing nature of the criticisms that the Airfix craft workers and the unskilled workers at Glyberforce had of their respective work environments is reflected in their responses to a related item. The following open-ended question was asked: "If there was one thing about your job that you could change, what would it be?" (Table 14).

TABLE 14

Change Desired in Present Job by Company and Skill Level

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Working conditions	33%	8%	33%	0%
Organization of work, management and supervision	11	24	9	0
More convenient hours	11	11	9	0
Nothing	11	13	9	40
Other/Don't Know	33	45	45	60
TOTAL N	9	38	33	5

Whereas 33% of the Glyberforce unskilled workers cite working conditions as the feature of their work situation that they would like to see changed, the skilled men at Airfix repeat their misgivings about management's efficiency and organizational abilities.

Note should be made of the fact that the nature of the skilled aircraftmen's criticisms do not appear to be unique to either Western Canada or the Aircraft repair industry. In his study of workers in French and British oil refineries, Gallie (1978) similarly found management to be the target of criticism of the maintenance craftsmen in both countries. By contrast, the process operators were more concerned with the quality of working conditions and problems encountered with shift work. Likewise, in the British 'affluent worker' study, the identical question about desired changes in the present job produced findings very similar to those observed here: the craft sample similarly proposed changes in the organizaton of work, particularly in the quality of supervision. Goldthorpe et al's remarks apply equally well to the skilled aircraftsmen in the present study:

> The main emphasis in the craftsmen's replies was, in effect, on changes which would, in their view, lead to greater efficiency and which would at the same time increase their own involvement in, and control over, the work process with which they were concerned. (Goldthorpe et al 1968:21)

A situation in which, for whatever reason, involvement in the job task is frustrated contains clear potential for conflict with management. Such is the case with the skilled aircraftsmen, a theme that will be returned to in the next chapter.

Expectations of the Job

Related to the distinction that is made between intrinsic and extrinsic job rewards is the thesis that workers orient themselves towards particular employers or jobs because of the prospective structuring of the job rewards. Indeed, the suggestion has been made that it makes little sense to talk about work satisfaction or alienation unless account is also taken of what individuals expect from their work in the way of rewards.

This argument has influenced interpretations of working-class instrumentalism. The instrumental worker is portrayed as one who chooses his form of employment for primarily economic considerations and offers an overall evaluation of his employer in terms of the same wage-related factors. Certainly job tasks are experienced in terms of drudgery and lack of discretion, but -- and this is the crucial point -- these are not features accorded much importance when an assessment is made regarding the overall merits of a job. The main priority is given to wages which, if offered in sufficient quantities, compensate for the lack of intrinsic rewards in a job.

This argument has been used to explain why, in previous studies, workers most dissatisfied with their jobs are not necessarily the most hostile to their employers. For instance, in their study of a food processing plant, Beynon and Blackburn (1972) found that the workers most committed to the company were those whose work situations were, objectively, the least attractive. These men were permanent night shift workers whose job tasks were governed by the dictates of an assembly-line technology. In light of Blauner's influential argument regarding the relationship between mass-production technology and job satisfaction, worker frustration and discontent would be predicted. Indeed, this proposition did receive some support -- the night shift men complained more than any other group about the uninteresting and unsatisfying nature of their job tasks. However, an interesting and worthwhile job was not given a very high priority by these men. They were predominantly married with young families, and their prime requirement of a job was that it should provide a steady, weekly wage. Their orientation to work was, therefore, essentially instrumental; as the firm was able and willing to meet this requirement, the night shift men were relatively well satisfied with their overall employment situation.

On the other hand, the workers most dissatisfied with the company held what were probably the most interesting jobs in the factory. They were semi-skilled process workers and machine operators who worked a permanent day-shift. They were young, held expectations of interesting work that were not fulfilled, were hostile to supervisors and were not encumbered with the family responsibilities that would have muted their grievances.

The authors explain the differences between the two groups (and additional ones between the full- and part-time women employed in the plant) in terms of the argument that "different people have different wants and expectations, and satisfaction with the total job depends on how adequately they feel the most salient of these are met" (Beynon and Blackburn, 1972:85-86).

Addressed to the same issue, the kinds of reward the skilled and unskilled workers in the present study expected to receive from their jobs were examined. Respondents were asked to select, from a list of items, the two aspects they considered to be the most important when looking for a job (Table 15).

The important features of a potential job most frequently mentioned by all respondents were good pay, pleasant working conditions, and the interesting and varied nature of the work; moreover, for all four groups, pay and benefits were regarded as the single most important aspect of a job. The unskilled workers at Glyberforce placed the most single stranded emphasis upon the extrinsic rewards at work: 80% of them mentioned money as an important feature of a job, half as many again as the next most frequently mentioned factor, an interesting and varied job -- cited by 38% of the group. The concern with economic rewards was no less pronounced among the skilled men at Glyberforce: 82% of the maintenance men

TABLE 15

The Most Important Features of a Job by Company and Skill Level

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Interest and Variety	55%	51%	38%	33%
Good pay and benefits	82	57	80	44
Good Workmates	0	21	25	22
Supervisor	9	0	15	44
Pleasant Working Conditions	55	55	28	33
Strong and Active Union	0	2	15	0
Chance for Overtime	0	0	0	0
TOTAL N	11	47	40	9

similarly accorded a central importance to pay and benefits. However, their orientations were less exclusively instrumental than their unskilled counterparts: an interesting and varied job was regarded as important by six of the eleven (55%) maintenance craftsmen.

The skilled aircraft workers also had a balanced set of job priorities, although pay and benefits, mentioned by 27 (57%) of them, again appeared to predominate. Interesting and varied work tasks was one of the two most important features of a job for 24 (51%) of this group, while a similar number cited pleasant working conditions.

To what degree are the job reward expectations of the different groups of workers fulfilled by the firms they work for? This question is answered by examining the extent to which, for each occupational group, the aspects of a job regarded as most important are simultaneously perceived as being one of the best features of the present job. The pattern of results is shown in Table 16.

TABLE 16

Proportion Rating 'Important' Aspects as One of the Best Features of Present Job by Company and Skill Level

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Two most important aspects of a job.	73% (8 out of 11)	52% (25 out of 48)	50% (20 out of 40)	0%

The indication is that for three of the four occupational groups that comprise the sample, there is a reasonably high level of congruence between what workers want in a job and the rewards that they see their jobs as actually providing them with. On this measure, at least, the basic job expectations of skilled (in particular) and unskilled groups of workers at Glyberforce and the skilled aircraftsmen are met. The complete lack of congruence between expectations and rewards among the unskilled men at Airfix is, on the face of it, hard to understand. Prior to this point, the small number of non-tradesmen have revealed themselves to be fairly satisfied with their lot at Airfix. There is a strong suspicion, however, that rather than revealing hitherto undetected dissatisfactions among the group, these deviant findings are simply an artifact of the small number of men in this occupational category who supplied the appropriate information on job expectations and rewards.

Attitudes Towards Pay

The final issue to be confronted in this chapter is arguably the most important. For most wage-earners, the wage-effort bargain (cf. Baldamus, 1961) is a central feature of their work experience. For unskilled manual workers, it cuts even deeper: their jobs are so limited in scope and content that they are explicable only as a source of income (Rinehart, 1978). Indeed, it is known from data already presented that the unskilled Glyberforce workers regard the level of pay as being the best feature of working for Glyberforce. The potential salience of the wage issue for workers is therefore such that attitudes to pay might colour views on other aspects of their overall work situation. For this reason, it was felt important to probe feelings about their take-home pay.

Respondents were asked whether they thought their take-home pay was very reasonable, reasonable, satisfactory, poor or very poor. In retrospect, the author feels that the categories of "reasonable" and "satisfactory" are not sufficiently distinct, and might not adequately tap variations in strengths of feelings on the pay issue. However, whatever the possible problems of nomenclature, these response categories were presented to interviewees as a scale. In any event, the general picture is clear enough. Although a number of factors are operative in determining satisfaction with pay, overall, variations in satisfaction rest upon which of the two companies respondents work for rather than their skill level (Table 17).

Men at Glyberforce report a greater satisfaction with pay than do the aircraft workers. However, it was also evident that within each plant, and -- more significantly - within each skill category -- the younger men

TABLE 17

Adequacy of Take-Home Pay by Company and Skill Level

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Very Reasonable	27%	9%	20%	0
Reasonable	64	36	50	55
Satisfactory	9	38	28	27
Poor	0	15	3	9
Very Poor	0	2	-	0
TOTAL N	11	48	40	10

(that is, the under 30's) were more satisfied with the adequacy of their take-home pay than the older men (the over 30's). The net outcome is that the older skilled aircraft men emerge as the occupational group least satisfied with their pay. Conversely, the younger unskilled Glyberforce workers are the group most likely to express satisfaction with pay. It might also be noted that the frequency with which the skilled aircraft workers made spontaneously negative references to their pay was not matched by the other occupational groups.

At both plants the bases for pay comparisons were external to the plant. At Airfix, the craftsmen on the one hand recognized that wages in the aircraft industry across Canada were generally lower than those found in other industries; on the other hand, they felt that in comparison with those in skilled trades in other industries, and in some cases, non-tradesmen, their skills, experience and responsibilities were inadequately rewarded. Hence a feeling of relative deprivation:

> "Well, in relation to a motor mechanic, truck mechanic, I don't think we're gettting paid the right wages; 'cos we're getting less than heavy duty mechanics...garage mechanics -- they're

> getting $12-$13 an hour; we don't get that (Aircraft mechanic, aged 44)
>
> The aircraft industry itself is a very low paid industry -- that is one of the worse things about it (the job) really. It requires as much, maybe more, skill than a hell of a lot of jobs that pay much more (Aircraft painter, aged 57)
>
> "No, it's not very reasonable - it's not actually the best, it's not the best paying. I can remember when the building trades...were about the same; and the garage mechanics. Well, in lot's of ways now, carpenters and that are getting a lot more. (Aircraft mechanic, aged 64)

The unskilled men at Glyberforce similarly used an external reference point for evaluating their take-home pay, although in their case the comparisons were more favourable to their current employer. In fact, as previously noted, Glyberforce was widely used by respondents as a bench-mark in the local unskilled labour market; they clearly recognized that for men without formal skills or qualifications, they were not only well paid, but also unlikely to find another employer in the Edmonton area that offered such relatively generous wages for unskilled labour:

> "The wages are really good there...for unskilled labour, it's very high paying, O.K. (Crewman, aged 29)
>
> Well, compared to the wages I was getting at, let's see, Woolco and W.W. Arcade, it's a decent wage. After working in those places, it's almost double your pay. (Member of the nodulator crew, aged 52)
>
> Very reasonable...because on our surveys with the union, it's about the highest paid plant in this whole city. (Talley driver, aged 29)

In addition, there is also the possibility that the above findings understate the aircraft workers discontents with their pay. In the course of answering this question, the comment was frequently made by the older craftsmen that the reason they felt their current level of pay to be 'satisfactory' or 'reasonable' was that their house was now bought and paid for, or that their children were now no longer financially dependent upon them. The point was quite explicitly made that were they -- like their younger co-workers -- still in the 'life-cycle squeeze' (cf. Goldthorpe et al, 1968) then their assessment of their take home pay would be very different. The essentially conditional nature of the older aircraftmen's satisfaction with wages is illustrated by this 59 year old repair and overall mechanic:

> "The wages are adequate...speaking entirely for myself, from our own position, I really have no complaints. But there again, this is based primarily on the fact that we have finished paying for our house, and our needs are not that great. I can certainly appreciate that younger people might find it different.

Previous research has similarly documented the potential that exists for craft dissatisfaction with wages. Wedderburn and Crompton (1972) note that, despite the fact that they had considerably higher earnings than any of the groups of general workers, the tradesmen in their study were the most dissatisfied with the wages. Their sense of grievance originated in the presence on the site of outside contractors whose superior earnings sharpened the tradesmens' awareness that more highly paid work was available to them locally. Again, commenting upon the degree of craft dissatisfaction with pay in the affluent worker study, Goldthorpe et al suggest that craft workers have higher expectations than other manual workers which, if not fulfilled, lead to an acute sense of grievance. Part of the craft prerogative, as it were, is the taken-for-granted assumption of a high economic return for skill and labour. In the light of this kind of argument, it is not hard to understand the skilled aircraftsmen's grievances. By craft standards, they are not particularly well-paid, earning an average not that much more than the considerably younger, unskilled men at Glyberforce, and less than the maintenance craftsmen at the same plant.[1]

CONCLUSIONS

The discussion of attitudes towards pay completes the analysis for this chapter. The focus has been upon workers and their jobs, the results a mix of the expected and unexpected. The two craft groups derive greater intrinsic satisfactions from their job tasks than do the unskilled Glyberforce workers, are more closely identified with their occupations, and enjoy a degree of discretion and control largely denied those without craft skills. However, while the results indicate that, overall, the basic divide is between the craft and non-craft workers, other findings suggest that skill level per se is not the only element in the work situation responsible for variations in workers' attitudes. First of all, on some issues, there are differences between the two craft groups. The Glyberforce maintenance men offer a more positive assessment of their current job, are more likely to emphasise its intrinsically satisfying aspects, and more likely to feel financially well rewarded than the skilled aircraftsmen. Simiarly, there are indications at Airfix that the climate among the craftsmen is more critical of management than is found among the maintenance craftsmen at Glyberforce. In a similar vein, the lack of variation between the craft and non-craft workers at Airfix and the concomitant differences between the two groups of non-craft workers again suggest that not all observed differences between the four occupational groups are attributabale to skill level.

The present chapter has set the scene for the next one, where the focus shifts to workers' industrial attitudes. The question that informs that chapter concerns the nature of the relationship between the skill divide within the manual working class and, firstly, perceptions of management and, secondly, industrial ideology. The findings from this chapter should prepare the reader for a pattern of results not easily accomodated by a simplistic formulation of the skill-consciousness relationship.

CHAPTER THREE

FOOTNOTES

1. Figures 1: Average Weekly Gross Earnings by Company and Skill Level

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
$150 - $200	0%	0%	11%	0%
$250 - $300	0	2	0	8
$300 - $350	0	8	56	88
$350 - $400	27	63	22	13
$400 - $450	64	17	11	5
$450 and over	9	10	0	0
TOTAL N	11	48	40	9

CHAPTER FOUR

WORKERS' INDUSTRIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

This Chapter examines respondents' images of industry and industrial relations. The initial concern is with how the different groups of skilled and unskilled workers view their firms as employers. Questions of a more abstract nature pertaining to workers' industrial consciousness are then introduced. The direction of the questioning thus moves from the specific to the general, a procedure predicated on the assumption that immediate workplace relationships form the basis for broader images of industry or industrial consciousness.

Workers and Their Companies

The first question asked of respondents was: "Compared to other employers that you have had experience with or heard about, how would you rate Airfix Industries/Glyberforce as a firm to work for?" The findings are presented in Table 18.

TABLE 18

Assessment of Present Firm as a Firm to Work for by Skill Level and Company

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Better than most	80%	40%	33%	56%
About average	20	56	44	33
Worse than mos	0	4	23	11
TOTAL N	10	45	39	9

Overall, these findings suggest that most respondents evaluate their firms fairly positively. Nonetheless, there are variations in terms of the degree to which the four occupational groups are prepared to project positive views of their employers. First of all, it is fairly clear that both the most and least positive employees are drawn from Glyberforce: 8 of the 10 maintenance men who answered the question thought the company to be better than most; whereas -- in contrast to the other groups -- a significantly large minority of the unskilled Glyberforce workers (23%) regarded the Company to be 'worse than most'. All nine of these men were under 30. The attitudes of the skilled aircraft men are also worth noting, for the pattern of their overall responses falls somewhere between those of the two Glyberforce groups. That is to say, they are generally less enthusiastic about Airfix than their skilled counterparts are of Glyberforce, and less critical of their company than the unskilled Glyberforce workers. There was also an indication that the older skilled aircraft men, that is, those over the age of 30, were less likely than the younger ones -- the under 30's -- to compare Airfix favourably with previous employers.

In the previous Chapter, the tendency of the skilled aircraftsmen to cite management as the locus of their discontents was noted. Their criticisms revolved around a lack of confidence in managerial effectiveness. However, responses to a further question reveal that their negative feelings about management are not limited to its efficiency. The four groups of workers were asked about their perceptions of the interests of management. Respondents were asked whether they thought that management was most concerned with the interests of the workers, the shareholders, or of everybody (Table 19).

TABLE 19

Perceptions of the Interests of Management by Skill Level and Company

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Mnagement is most concerned with:				
1. Interests of workers	18%	2%	5%	0%
2. Interests of shareholders	45	72	51	40
3. Interests of everybody	36	26	43	60
TOTAL N	11	43	37	10

These findings suggest that a majority (58%) of all workers, regardless of skill level, feel that management's interests lie mainly with the shareholders. The men most likely to hold this opinion, irrespective of age, are the skilled aircraft workers from Airfix. At Glyberforce, the older and younger unskilled workers appear to diverge on this issue: 10 of the 15 (67%) men over 30 felt that managaement were concerned with everybody, whereas 14 of the 22 younger men (65%) judged managements' interests to lie solely with the shareholders.

All the groups were remarkably similar in the reasons they volunteered for their essentially critical assessments of their companies. The common theme was that all large enterprises -- not just necessarily the one that they happened to work for -- existed primarily to make a profit; and that the profit motive dictated the attitude that management adopted towards its workforce:

> "I think they are mostly interested in the shareholders. I don't think they care too much about the men...they're numbers..." (Aircraft painter, Airfix, aged 59)

> "Any big company, like my company, number one is interested in the shareholders. That's number one.

> Number two interested in the company. Number three -- interested in the staff upstairs -- the big position holders. Number four, the office staff -- even the little clerk. Number five, then we come -- the people, that gives everybody bread and butter; from number five up -- feeds all those people. But it's not in my company like that -- it's in everybody's company.
>
> This is the capitalist system: I'm for the capitalist system...I'd rather work for those people -- I get something from them, but this is what it is." (Aircraft mechanic, Airfix, aged 58)

> "At Glyberforce? I think they are just interested in how much they are making...we're just a number there. Shareholders, right!" (Batch loader, Glyberforce, 39 years old)

Although a recurring theme, the feeling of being 'just a number' was rarely as bitterly expressed as it was by this 65 year old storesman at Airfix:

> "They're not interested in the workers because they don't give a goddam for the workers...because you are just a piece of dirt under their feet, that's all...you are just a number...just a number."

The final question concerning workers' immediate relationship with their employer similarly probes perceptions of management's motivations and priorities. The question asked, "Do you think that your firm could pay you more money than it does without damaging its prospects for the future?", directly taps workers' feelings about the quality of financial reward offered by employers to workers for their contribution to the wage-effort bargain. Like the previous item, this question is designed to explore whether workers perceive a harmony or divergence of interests between themselves and management (Table 20).

TABLE 20

Assessment of Firm's Ability to Pay More Without Damaging Its Prospects for the Future by Skill Level and Company

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Firm could pay more	91%	72%	97%	75%
Firm could not pay more	9	17	0	13
Don't Know	0	11	3	13
TOTAL N	11	46	39	8

These findings leave little doubt that respondents in all occupational categories believe that their firm could pay higher wages. At Glyberforce, there was almost complete consensus that this was the case: 97% of the unskilled men felt that the company could pay more, as did 91% of the skilled men. Nor was it very hard to find out what the source of this attitude was: the worker's awareness that Glyberforce's dominance of the home-insulation market ensured the company massive profit levels, their own contribution to which was inadequately rewarded. Could Glyberforce pay more?"

> "You bet it could. This is counting all the Glyberforce plants in all, all the insulation plants. Last year they made about $23 million clear profit. That was after all wages are to be paid and everything. So,...I mean...you would like a wee piece of the pie. I mean, you are blooming well working for it, and producing for them." (49 year old Production Tester)

> "Glyberforce could pay three times the rate that they do now -- it wouldn't hurt them." (22 year old Fork Lift Truck Driver)

Although sharing the same overall critical stance, a minority (17%)of the skilled aircraft workers felt that the nature of the aircraft industry, particularly the fact that bidding for contracts was very competitive, precluded the company paying higher wages. This attitude is reflected in the following comments. Could the Company pay more?:

> "No, not really. Because it's a kind of competitive world right now as far as aircraft go. We're charging in the region of $25 an hour to a customer. We're being paid somewhere in the region of $9 an hour. Quite obviously, if we started earning $12 or $13 an hour then the customer has got to pay X amount of dollars more."
> J.R.T. And they might go elsewhere?
> Respondent (44 year old Sheet-metal technician) - Sure.

> "No, I think they are probably doing as well as they can. It's a sort of up and down proposition this aircraft business.
> J.R.T. Because of the contracts?
> Respondent (a 63 year old maintenance carpenter): Yeah, the contracts. Right now, we've got a pretty good contract. But then it's hard to say what they'll get after that, you see.

Nonetheless, this was still a minority opinion; the majority of the aircraft workers (72%) emphasized that, as part of the larger Canadian Aviation and Electronics (C.A.E.) organization, Airfix could well afford to pay higher wages:

> "I would say so, definitely. Their shares are always going up. They are a big company, they are owned by C.A.E., C.A.E. shares are always going up." (39 year old Hydraulic mechanic)

> "Yes, I do because belonging to C.A.E., which it is, it's stocks are doing damned good. I think they could, really; and the aircraft business is good especially dealing with the Government, especially now when they are buying new fighters. 'Cos I think we'll get work -- well, we will get work. All aircraft companies across Canada, I guess they'll get all the work they can handle." (32 year old storesman).

Not all respondents invoked the particular market situation of Airfix as the reason for believing that the company could afford to pay higher wages. Some had more generalized reasons for holding this view:

> "Well, you see, I'm not a businessman, and I really don't know. According to things that I hear, like on television, the companies and corporations are making a pile of money. Now...I don't think they deserve to make that much money, 'cos they don't help the cost of living...and I'm pretty sure that our company is the same, for their shareholders." (Aircraft Painter, aged 59)

> "I don't believe that any company would pay the maximum amount that it can without hurting itself willingly. They might if they were coerced into it some way or another. But not willingly -- nobody will." (52 year old Quality Control Inspector)

The investigation into workers' attitudes towards their employers has produced a pattern of results that would not have been entirely predicted on the basis of the earlier findings regarding workers' job identifications and involvements. Firstly, differences in the kind of job satisfactions that skilled and unskilled workers enjoy have produced no discernable variations in attitudes regarding the relationship between company profits and wages: most workers, irrespective of skill level, felt that the wages offered by their company did not correspond to the size of company profits. Secondly, and more importantly, the two groups that stand out as being most unsympathetic to management are at opposite ends of the skill hierarchy. The young, unskilled workers at Glyberforce proffered the most negative evaluaton of their current employer as a company to work for, while the most critical appraisal of perceived managerial motivations came from the ranks of the skilled trades at the aircraft repair plant.

Technical and Relational Criticism of Management

To complicate matters further, there is some indication that the types of management criticism offered by these two groups are quite different. As was demonstrated in the last Chapter, managerial inefficiency is the focus of the skilled aircraftsmens' grievances. This type of criticism has been described by Gallie (1978:74) as technical criticism. In his formulation, technical criticism of management is to be contrasted with relational criticism, which deals with the content of manager-worker interaction -- in other hands, authority relations in industry.

As a response to the specific questions about dislikes of, and desired changes in the job (Chapter 3), complaints about management were not cited with any great frequency by the unskilled Glyberforce workers. However, throughout the course of the interview -- in replies to other questions or as part of a general discussion -- there were frequent, spontanious negative references to 'the bosses'. Moreover, in contrast to the skilled aircraftsmen, the anti-management comments emanating from the non-skilled Glyberforce workers fell under the rubric of relational criticism. Typically these comments focused upon the pernicious manner in which the foremen and supervisors welded their power:

> Some of the supervisors and bosses are difficult to get along with. I shouldn't say don't get along with -- you know, you just don't talk with them, you're an extention of the machinery to them; you don't work, out you go...I don't like that at all. (20 year old Crewmen)

> "Well, it's always got to go their way, see, they're running the outfit -- you're not. Even if you have some ideas -- "We tell you, you don't tell us!"...you're stepped on too much, it's always got to be their way." (36 year old Driver)

The target of these criticisms is not, it should be noted, the plant or personnel manager. Most Glyberforce workers rarely came into contact with such remote personnages of power, though, of course, that is where power in the plant really lay. Management, for most workers, in most situations, were the supervisors and foremen, with whom they had their closest encounters, not always of the most pleasant kind. It was these encounters which provided the unskilled men with the substance of their critique of authority relationships within the plant.[1]

Both the relational criticisms of the unskilled Glyberforce workers and the essentially favourable assessment of management proferred by the maintenance men at the same plant are consistent with that body of research, discussed in the opening Chapter, which predicts a direct relationship between skill level and integration with the firm. The same cannot be said of the Airfix workers, where the skilled tradesmen, in particular, have provided this study with its unexpected findings. To make sense of their anti-management sentiments, it is necessary to invoke the insights of the new working class theorists, whose ideas were also touched upon in the opening Chapter.

For writers such as Mallet, the highly critical perceptions of management held by skilled technicians are generated precisely because of a close involvement and identification with job tasks: organizational factors that curb their involvement lead to discontent. The basic tenets of this argument have recently received empirical substantiation in the form of John Low-Beer's analysis of the new working-class in Italy. Interviews with technical workers in two electronics plants in Milan revealed an uncomfortable lack of congruence between attitudes towards the job task itself and attitudes towards the work organization. More specifically, those most dissatisfied with the work organization were not necessarily those who had the most restricted (in terms of skill content) job tasks. The explanation used to resolve this apparent paradox rests upon the demonstration that the most aggrieved groups (testers and lab technicians) "do involving work in an organization that hinders their becoming involved" (Low-Beer 1978:83).

Here, then, is the all important clue as to why relatively privileged workers in the advanced sectors nonetheless sometimes comprise the most prominent, radical element within the working class. Moreover, although most frequently associated with white-collar technical workers, there is nothing in the logic of the argument which necessarily limits its applicability to highly skilled white-collar workers as opposed to highly skilled blue-collar workers. What gives this thesis its orginality is not its focus upon white-collar workers per se, but its emphasis upon the clash between highly skilled workers' involvement with their jobs and the organizational principles and practices of their firms which undermines their involvement. There is no inherent reason why this should not similarly be a problem for skilled blue-collar craftsmen. Indeed, I would contend that this is precisely the issue that distinguishes the two groups of craftsmen in the present study. The skilled aircraftsmen, as demonstrated in the previous Chapter, often experience deep frustration with management and its organizing prowess; the craftsmen at Glyberforce encounter no such constrictions in their jobs. This is in large part due to their role as maintenance men.

Glyberforce, it bears repeating, is a capital intensive firm. Breakdowns in production are very costly: according to one electrician, 'Down-time' costs the Company $500 every minute a line was not working. The maintenance craftsmen's job is to minimize the economic consequences of any disruption in production. As another electrician explains it, "The maintenance staff...is an insurance policy -- you are there just to keep the place running." That such a situation directly contributes to the maintenance craftsmens' sense of freedom, responsibility -- and, indeed, power -- is well illustrated by this millwright's testament:

> "I have lots of responsibility, there. On shift, there's only two mechanics, and you're pretty well left to run...you're left on your own...and...the supervisor is dependent upon you to keep things running...and they don't get on your back when you aren't doing anything as long as everything is running O.K. Production is their game, eh? and my job is to see that production is kept up.

A similar attitude is expressed by the electrician who viewed the role of maintenance as an insurance policy. Why did he like his job?

> "Well, the freedom we have. In our department there's...when we work our afternoon shift we are free of everybody else. We are only there to take care of the plant, and make sure that the plant remains running. So you are pretty well on your own...If you want to get in there and work, you've got a lot of work to do. But if you don't want to work, you don't really have (to) -- you understand what I mean? We're there really just to keep the place running.

The scope of the maintenance men's job tasks contrasts with the more constricted work experiences of the skilled aircraft workers. They worked in more or less one place, and as production craftsmen working to a schedule, have nothing like the freedom or decision-making capabililties enjoyed by the maintenance craftsmen at Glyberforce. And, of course, the restrictions of their work situation are amplified because they are saddled with, in their view, inefficient management.[2]

The results presented in this section are a clear portent of the complexity of the skill-consciousness relationship. Just how complex this relationship can be is revealed in the next section, where the emphasis shifts to workers' more generalized industrial ideologies.

Workers' Generalized Industrial Ideologies

To this point, the industrial attitudes of the sample of skilled and unskilled workers have been examined in terms of the immediate context of their particular employer. These attitudes are therefore essentially expressions of individual's responses to their specific work experiences. In this section, the analysis is broadened by focusing upon workers' more abstract conceptualizations of social relations in industry generally. Hence the thrust of the questioning is directed towards uncovering workers' more systematic understandings of the structural basis of industrial inequality. To this end, respondents were presented with a series of questions, ranging from the proletarian left to the conservative right designed to gauge their images of industry in general. Nine of the twelve items were taken from a British study conducted by Blackburn and Mann (1975); three other items, all of which had been used in previous research, were also included. By situating the questions in an industrial context, it was hoped to reduce the tendency, well noted with more orthodox political questioning, for respondents to offer standard responses to familiar cues (Blackburn and Mann, 1975:133). The intention, in other words, was to ask questions which spoke to workers' direct experiences of industry. Respondents were asked whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed, or were undecided with each of the following statements:

1. Most decisions taken by foreman and supervisors would be better if they were taken by the workers themselves (workers' decisions; Agree = Left).
2. Most managements have the welfare of the workers at heart (Welfare; Agree = Right).
3. Full teamwork in firms is impossible because workers and management are really on opposite sides (Teamwork; Agree = Left).
4. Managers know what's best for the firm and workers should do just what they are told (Obedience; Agree = Right).

5. Most major conflicts between managements and workers are caused by agitators and extremists (Agitators; Agree = Right).

6. Big business has too much power in this country (Big business; Agree = Left).

7. Giving workers more say in running their firms would only make things worse (Workers' control; Agree = Right).

8. Every worker should join a Trade Union because workers should stick together (Solidarity; Agree = Left).

9. Industry should pay more of its profits to workers and less to shareholders (Redistribution; Agree = Left).

10. The worker should always be loyal to his firm even if this means putting himself out quite a bit (Loyalty; Agree = Right).

11. All managements will try to put one over on the workers if they get the chance (Deception; Agree = Left).

12. The Trade Unions in this country have too much power (Trade Union Power; Agree = Right).

The questions were presented to workers in this order. By randomizing 'Left and "right" items, it was hoped to minimize response set. To ensure consistency, the six 'right' items (that is, those items for which agreement is taken as being indicative of Right-wing attitudes), were scored in the opposite direction. Hence the lowest scores indicated the highest commitment to a Proletarian ideology.

The first stage in the analysis is to find out whether or, not these items are tapping a single ideological dimension. A positive correlation between the various items would provide empirical justification for employing a single scale as a measure of industrial ideology. Hence, in Table 21 the inter-correlation matrix scores for the 12 items are presented.

TABLE 21

Correlations Between Ideology Items

	Left						Right					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Left												
1. Workers' Decisions	1.0											
2. Teamwork	.36	1.0										
3. Big Business	.11	.13	1.0									
4. Solidarity	.21	.21	.20	1.0								
5. Redistribution	.25	.22	.31	.32	1.0							
6. Deception	.30	.29	.15	.34	.32	1.0						
Right												
7. Welfare	.12	.13	.11	-0.4	.08	.12	1.0					
8. Obedience	.09	.05	.04	.02	-.027	-.06	.23	1.0				
9. Agitators	-0.04	-.02	.03	-.03	-.034	.07	.38	.19	1.0			
10. Worker's Control	.19	.09	.08	.10	.19	.02	.21	.17	.26	1.0		
11. Loyalty	.14	.12	.29	.08	.21	.04	.09	.31	.11	.29	1.0	
12. Trade Union Power	.12	.00	.12	.35	.10	.15	.19	.24	.31	.19	.25	1.0

The first things to note about these scores is that 59 out of the 66 correlations are positive, suggesting that, overall, the items are measures of a similar ideological configuration. An unrotated factor analysis carried out on the twelve ideology items provided further support for this belief (Table 22).

TABLE 22

Ideology factor weights

	Factor 1	Factor 2
1. Worker's Decisions	0.17	-0.11
7. Welfare	0.12	0.17
2. Teamwork	0.14	-0.13
8. Obedience	0.10	0.20
9. Agitators	0.12	0.32
3. Big Business	0.12	-0.04
10. Worker's Control	0.13	0.13
4. Solidarity	0.17	-0.15
5. Redistribution	-.31	-0.18
11. Loyalty	0.15	0.10
6. Deception	0.17	-0.18
12. Trade Union Power	0.16	0.14

The indication is that each of the twelve items loads on the first factor. Although none of the scores are particularly high, all the items appear to be measures of a single ideological dimension. As is the case with the original British study, the second factor does not lend itself to any easy interpretation. Conseuqently, the weighted scores from the first factor were used to form the measure of worker's industrial ideology.[3]

Skill level, workplace (i.e. which of the two companies respondents worked for), age, and Canadian/non-Canadian birth were initially looked at as potential sources of variation in industrial ideology. Table 23 indicates that although none of the correlation scores are very high, easily the strongest overall correlate of ideology is workplace (0.26), followed by skill level. Glyberforce displays a stronger attachment to Proletarian values than does Airfix; and skill level is inversely related to Proletarianism.

TABLE 23

Ideology and Related Variables: Correlations

	Ideology
Ideology	1.000
Skill Level	.14
Company	.26
Age	.09
Country of Birth	-.09

The importance of workplace as a determinant of ideology is underscored when the relationships among all three independent variables operating simultaneously on ideology are examined. To accomplish this, a step-wise multiple regression of ideology on the three predictor variables was undertaken. The characteristic of this statistical technique is that variables are selected, in rank order, at each step, on the basis of their contribution to statistical explanation (Table 24).

This multivariate analysis indicates that the best predictor of workers' industrial ideology is workplace. However, although significant at the .005 level, it only accounts for 6% of the variation. The second, and only other relatively important source of overall variation is birth-place -- Canadian-born workers having higher ideology scores than non-Canadian born workers. It, however, only accounts for a further two percent of the variation.

TABLE 24

Step-Wise Regression of Ideology on Skill Level, Company, Age and Birth Place (Beta weights reported)

Predictor:	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Skill Level			
Company	.25	.27	
Age			
Birth		-.13	
Total R^2	.06	0.08	
	p=.0095	p=.0147	

For a study predicated on the assumption that skill level is an important source of variation in working-class ideology, this is not a promising start. At the same time, the apparently seminal role played by workplace is consistent with earlier findings which similarly indicate that inter-plant differences in worker attitudes are greater than those deriving from the broader skill divide. Furthermore, the indication that Glyberforce is a more successful repository of industrial proletarianism than Airfix tells us little about possible internal variations within each plant. Accordingly, subsequent step-wise analysis focused upon the correlates of ideology in the two plants separately. Analysing the ddata in this form reveals that skill level has a contradictory effect upon ideology in the two plants (Table 25).

At Glyberforce, skill level correlates in the expected direction with ideology better than does either age or birthplace. Age does, however, mediate the relationship between skill level and ideology: the strongest expressions of proletarian ideology come from the young (under 30) unskilled workers. Conversely, the Glyberforce men least committed to proletarianism are the over 30 skilled craftsmen.

TABLE 25

Step-wise Multiple Regression of Ideology on Skill Level

Age and Country of Birth by Company

GLYBERFORCE

Predictor:	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Skill Level	.10		
Age		.13	
Country of Birth		-.10	
Total R^2	.01	.02	

AIRFIX

Predictor:	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Skill Level		-.11	-.11
Age			.02
Country of Birth	-.23	-.22	-.21
Total R^2	.06	.07	.07

That Proletarian values are most strongly adhered to by the young, unskilled workers at Glyberforce comes as no real surprise; after all, this is what originally would have been anticipated, given the limited nature of the job tasks and roles engaged in by this group of workers. The responses of this group of unskilled workers hint at a nascent group consciousness, of a fairly rudimentary nature, which owes its existence to workers' direct personal experience with the labour process. The roots of this embryonic oppositional consciousness are to be found in workers' reactions to first-line supervision and foremen (though less frequently to the more remote -- and powerful -- senior management); the stultifying effects of a mass-production technology; poor working conditions; and the realization that the company profits more from their labour than they themselves do.

The finding that the older, unskilled Glyberforce workers have a weak attachment to Proletarian values might be accounted for by one of two explanations. The moderating role of the aging process may be responsible. In the course of time, marriage and family responsibilities blunt grievances and hostilities and transforms young militants into employees prepared to cooperate with employers in return for the promised rewards of seniority. Thus movement through the life cycle, in conjunction with the operation of an internal labour market, undercuts a latently radical orientation to industrial life. An equally plausible interpretation is that this group of men have always held moderate views on industrial life, and what we are witnessing here is the product of selective attrition. The most discontent -- and potentially radical -- of the Glyberforce crewmen leave their jobs. The ones who remain are more attuned to conservative values, and start the move up the job ladder. The present research is not designed to resolve this issue, though the most plausible explanation is that both processes are at work.

A quite different picture is revealed at the aircraft plant. Here the best predictor of ideology is place of birth, followed by skill level. The relationship between ideology and place of birth is a significant one (at the .05 level) and accounts for 5 percent of the total variation on the ideology scale. The theoretical import of this finding will be discussed in a moment. For the present, attention will focus upon the impact of skill level on ideology at Airfix. This relationship -- not a particularly strong one -- is a direct one. That is to say, those without craft skills are least likely to express proletarian industrial attitudes. In fact, these workers are the most conservative on this measure of the four occupational groups that make up the sample.[4] The net result is that skill level has an opposite effect in the two plants.

DISCUSSION

What do these findings reveal about workers' industrial ideologies? First of all, they indicate the existence of reasonably clear variations in the industrial perspectives of men who share a ostensibly similar class location as wage labourers. A basic premise of this study, outlined in the opening pages of the first chapter, has therefore been substantiated -- manual workers do not share a common industrial ideology. However, it has not been substantiated in a manner that provides unequivocal support for the more specific hypothesis that skill level is a direct and significant source of such variation. In fact, the impact of skill level is both weak and contradictory. Moreover, two variables of secondary theoretical import -- age and birth-place -- emerge as sometimes significant predictors of ideological variation.

The process by which age might effect workers' social perspectives was briefly sketched out in Chapter Two. What remains unaccounted for is the apparently critical role played by birth place, particularly in the aircraft plant. Actually, the second part of this question is easy enough to explain: a larger proportion of aircraft workers than Glyberforce workers are born outside of Canada.

Unfortunately, however, the first part of the question is not so easily dispensed with, although two plausible, albeit untestable, hypotheses suggest themselves. The first possibility is that employment experiences in their native country provide workers with a measuring rod by which to evaluate their Canadian experiences of industrial relations. Moreover, the industrial yardstick provided by their homeland is a negative one, hence a positive assessment of Canadian industry and a conservative ideological response. The second possibility is that the more conservative ideological orientation of non-Canadian born workers might simply reflect the fact that the ideological perspectives of those who have emigrated to Canada are non-random; more precisely, be they from Germany, Poland, the United Kingdom, immigrants to Canada have brought with them their conservative industrial attitudes.

But -- and serendipitous findings notwithstanding -- what is more interesting, and significant, about these results, is what they fail to uncover. None of the variables correlate very strongly with ideology, and only a small proportion of the variation in workers' ideology is actually accounted for. The fact that the variables expected to predict variations in working class ideology do so only in a tentative fashion might indicate that ideological thinking -- at least as far as it conforms to a recognizable 'Left-Right' dimension -- does not play a dominating or decisive role in workers' lives. This possibility might be documented by looking at the standard deviation of the ideology scores of all the workers in the sample. On a scale that ranged between 1 and 5, the mean score was 1.99 and the standard deviation .8144. Hence respondents' scores were widely distributed above and below the mean, indicating quite wide variations in workers' responses to the ideology scale.

The interpretation of workers' ideological thinking can be corroborated by a closer examination of the items that comprise the ideology scale. It has already been documented that the degree of association among the items is not very great. Nor, on strictly logical grounds, need this be particularly surprising. There is no compelling reason why a worker should not hold seemingly incongruous views on different topics which are, nonetheless, ideologically incompatible (cf. Blackburn and Mann, 1976:146). That is, he may simultaneously espouse a 'Left' attitude on the distribution of profits (in industry), and a 'Right' viewpoint on the curbing of trade union power. Now, if workers' attitudes are structured in this fashion, it will be reflected in low correlation scores between the various items. Table 21, already referred to, indicates that, empirically this is the case. However, the more important theoretical question is not so easy to dispense with. What is at issue is whether, in Blackburn and Mann's words, a worker "is giving greater importance to the particular issues than the underlying ideological dimensions, or whether he is just confused. The former suggests coherent images of society in which the Left-Right ideological dimension has low salience, while confusion suggests an absence of any clear ideological perception (or a failure to understand the question)" (147).

The relatively high internal correlations of the 'Left' and 'Right' items suggests the former explanation; or, more accurately, it suggests that workers' consciousness is characterized, as Blackburn and Mann put it, by pragmatism: the tendency to respond to specific items rather than an underlying ideological motif. Hence it is the element of contradiction that distinguishes the industrial consciousness of the workers in the study.

Contradictory Consciousness: Sources and Explanations

On this score, the present findings are not very different from other recent studies of working-class consciousness (S. Hill, 1976; R. Hill, 1978; Cousins and Brown, 1975; Blackburn and Mann, 1975). In a study of American auto workers, for instance, Garson found that his respondents held beliefs "both in the employers' right to managerial prerogative and workers' control, both in the merit of the democratic party and the need for a new party based on the needs of the working class, both in the satisfying nature of the job and the dissatisfying nature of most of its specific aspects" (Garson, 1973:27).

The pattern of these findings -- cumulatively suggesting that inconsistency and contradiction are the hallmarks of working-class consciousness -- have, not surprisingly, inspired a number of attempts at explanation. The first of these has focused upon the apparent greater diversity in manual workers' work and market situations than has been allowed for. In their study of British shipbuilding workers -- an industry characterized by the number and range of craft and non-craft occupations employed -- Brown and his colleagues attest to the importance of the non-homogeneous nature of workers' work environment: "different aspects of workers' work and community milieux may predispose them to visualize the class structure in different, possibly contradictory ways; a social situation which gives rise to a coherent image of society may well be the exception rather than the rule" (Cousins and Brown, 1975:57).

A second explanation of 'contradictory consciousness' has been given greater prominence in the literature, however. Coined by two commentators as the "Dominant ideology thesis" (Abercrombie and Turner, 1978), its principal soociological exponents argue that contradictory consciousness is the outcome of the clash between the pervasiveness of dominant values and workers' own direct experiences and face-to-face relationships. In Parkin's version of the argument:

> Members of the underclass are continually exposed to the influence of dominant values by way of the eduction system, newspapers, radio and television, and the like. By virtue of the powerful institutional backing they receive these values are not readily negated by those lacking other sources of knowledge and information (Parkin 1972:92)

However, these values, because of their dubious 'appropriateness' for members of the subordinate class, are not taken over wholesale; rather, they are modified "in the light of their own existential conditions" (1972:42). Thus, the dominant value system is neither accepted nor rejected: instead it is negotiated. In Parkin's formulation, therefore, working-class attitudes have their origins in two distinct levels of normative reference -- the dominant value system and its 'negotiated version'. Moreover, context and circumstances dictate which of the two levels will be invoked as the appropriate normative reference point at any given time: "in situations where purely abstract evaluations are called for, the dominant value system will provide the moral frame of reference; but in concrete social situations involving choice and action, the negotiated version -- or the subordinate value system -- will provide the moral framework" (1972:93).

It is not hard to predict the next stage in Parkin's argument. Questions asked of working-class respondents which are couched in general or abstract terms will be more likely than similar questions phrased in situational terms to result in attitudinal statements supportive of the status quo. The existence of 'abstract' and 'situational' normative orientations facilities ideological confusion and inconsistency.

Applying a similar kind of analysis, Mann broaches the concept of 'dual consciousness'. On the basis of a secondary analysis of a number of studies of working-class social perspectives, he argues that the frequently inconsistent and inchoate views held by workers are the product of conflicting attitudinal sources -- the dominant institutional order, embodied in the major agencies of socialization that relay the values of the status quo, on the one hand; and the direct personal experience that frequently contradicts the dominant values, on the other. Like Parkin, he emphasizes that "the working-class is more likely to support deviant values if those values relate either to concrete everyday life or to vague popular concepts than if they relate to an abstract political philosophy" (Mann, 1970:432). If workers' overall position in the division of labour does provide them with more than one way of viewing the broader social strucure, and if they have access to more than one explanation of socially structured inequality, then the likelihood of workers' consciousness appearing as a totally integrated, consistent whole is significantly reduced. Hence in this Edmonton study, measures of industrial radicalism and conservatism are not interpreted as tapping mutually exclusive domains of consciousness.

CONCLUSIONS

This Chapter has dealt with two related aspects of workers' situations in industry. The initial focus was upon workers' 'localised' perceptions of their employer. Attention then shifted to workers' broader, more abstract images of industry in general. In neither instance was the evidence for a straight-forward relationship between skill level and industrial attitudes overly impressive, a pattern accounted for by the presence of discordant elements in workers' social consciousness.

In the next Chapter, the focus shifts from the industrial arena to the explicitly political dimension of working-class consciousness: the subject matter is workers' political attitudes.

FOOTNOTES

1. One story told me by a few informants concerned the frequency with which probationary workers were arbitarity dismissed. All new employees at Glyberforce have to serve a probationary period of forty working days. Until he has completed his probation, an employee is not a union member. Some of my Glyberforce respondents told of occasions in which men were dismissed just prior to the completion of their probation. The shoddy treatment of the "39 Day-ers", as one man referred to them as, exemplified for some Glyberforce respondents the quality of the overall relationship between men and 'management'.

   Having heard this story more than once, I took the opportunity to ask one respondent why the Company tolerated the practice. His answer was that it was a means of weakening the Union. The constant labour turnover -- whether voluntary or involuntary -- at the bottom of the job ladder meant that no more than 60% of the work-force was, in effect, unionized at any one time. As my informant concluded: "if they can keep close to a majority out of the union...the Company is controlling the Union." I have no way of verifying the validity of this argument. However, its source was a one time shop steward at the plant, and seemingly well versed in the machinations of the Glyberforce management.

2. The reader should be reminded that the relative dissatisfaction with wages and uncertainties about long-term job security -- two characteristics of the Aircraft industry and its product market -- are also factors unlikely to encourage favourable views of Airfix management.

3. This conclusions was reached after considerable examination of the data. The inter-correlation matrix scores encouraged, for a while, the thought that more than one ideological dimension was being tapped by the various items. Table 21 shows that the correlation scores are higher among both the "left" and "right" items. All the "left" items correlated positively with each other, the mean score being .248; likewise, all the "right" items positively correlate, giving a mean score of .228. Whilst these scores are not particularly impressive, they are consistently higher than those of the Left with Right items, 7 out of 26 of which are negatively correlalted, and where the average correlation score is .108. The low scores and negative correlations that characterize the 'Left with Right' items suggested the existence of two, 'Left' and 'Right', ideological dimensions, rather than one unitary dimension.

   However, the only difference between the Left and Right items is the direction in which they are stated. There is no further theoretical reason for the low 'Left with Right' correlations or the concomitant (relatively) high internal (Left with Left, Right with Right) scores. Therefore, a more plausible explanation is that the pattern of these findings is a product of response set.

   The issue is a familiar one, and centres upon the tendency of respondents to agree with a statement regardless of the content of the item. The original inclination to believe that more than one ideological dimension had been discovered rested upon the findings produced by a two-factor rotated analysis. On the basis of further examination and discussion of these results, it was concluded that whilst the first factor taps the ideological dimension, the second factor measures the tendency to agree with the statement regardless of its content. That is, it measures an acquiscent response set. Moreover, a rotated factor analysis tends to conceal the degree to which this response set is taking place: more reliable results are produced by an unrotated factor analysis (Gillespie, 1982: personal communication). Hence the application of that statistical technique, which confirmed these suspicions.

4. It should be remembered that a number, though not all, of these men were old and held jobs typically reserved for the unfit and marginal -- janitor, storesman. A similar group -- characterised as a 'lumpen-proletariat' -- were also the most conservative in the British study.

CHAPTER FIVE

POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

Labour Politics in Alberta: The Historical Background

Typically, to describe members of the manual working-class as 'class conscious' entails a number of attitudinal and behavioural concomitants. In the context of electoral politics, probably the most significant of these is the expectation that not only will workers described as class conscious support electorally, and in other ways, 'left' political parties, but will also explain their support in terms of their recognition that such parties exist to defend and advance the interests of the working class. Moreover, in a number of countries, the connection between the Labour movement and the political process is quite explicit: the mass political party constitutes -- formally, at any rate -- the political arm of the labour movement; it is, in other words, labour's representative in parliament. The British Labour Party and the Swedish Social Democratic Party exemplify this symbolic relationship.

Canada, however, stands apart from this tradition. Despite its historical linkages with the labour movement, and its commitment to the social democratic socialist principles shared with its European counterparts, the New Democratic Party (N.D.P) and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (C.C.F.) before it, has not been very successful in galvanizing working-class support. Indeed, Canada has frequently been singled out for intensive scrutinization by students of voting behaviour because of the marked absence of class voting.

The progenitor of this interest is Robert Alford (1963), who argues that in Canada the difference between manual and non-manual support for the parties of the Left (the N.D.P. and the Liberals in his formulation) is much smaller than is found in other English speaking Social Democracies (Australia, Great Britain and the United States). Despite criticisms of both his methodology (Myles, 1979) and his formulation of the theoretical issues (Ogmundson, 1975a; 1975b; 1976), the kernel of his thesis has remained intact. Whilst the N.D.P. draws most of its electoral support from the manual sectors of the occupational structure, most manual workers do not vote for the N.D.P. Although these comments refer to Canada as a whole, and although there are regional variations (Erickson, 1981:123), they are not sufficientlly large to alter the basic postulate that, overall, the manual worker -- N.D.P. linkage is weak. Alberta is no exception to this generalization.

That said, Alberta does have a 'radical past' (Johnstone, 1979:91), the main responsibility for which lies with the unskilled and semi-skilled manual workers who fought the coal owners and Canadian Pacific Railroad (C.P.R.) in the first two decades of the present century (Caragata, 1979). However, this early twentieth century working-class radicalism has had little impact upon the subsequent course of Alberta labour politics, which by the 1920's was domianted by the conservative international craft unions. As Masson and Blackie have put it: "The craft union movement in Alberta paralleled the course of Samuel Gomper's organization in the United States in that both groups were conservative and limited their political activity to legislative bargaining" (Masson and Blackie, 1979:273).

The legacy of this political conservatism is to be found in the electoral attitudes and behavior of contemporary manual workers. First of all, and as already suggested, from its inception in the 1930's, the

C.C.F., and later the N.D.P., has continually failed to receive an electoran mandate from the urban working-class, on whose behalf it was, in large part, founded. In fact, N.D.P. electoral support has been largely based upon the rural and agricultural elements in Alberta society (Masson and Blaikie, 1979:275). Secondly, other research has similarly revealed a general indifference to the political fortunes of the N.D.P. on the part of manual workers in the Province. One study (Long and Quo, 1972, cited by Masson and Blaikie, 1979:278) indicates that in 1968 and 1969 less than 10% of skilled workers, and less than 20% of unskilled workers 'identified' with the N.D.P. Moreover, data from the Alberta 71 Provincial Election study (again quoted by Masson and Blaikie:278) shows that, on a range of issues, there is little difference in the political attitudes and behaviors between union members and other members of the general population of Alberta. For instance, 58% of union members, compared with 59% of the general population voted Progressive Conservative; conversely, 15% of union members voted for the N.D.P. against 8% of the Alberta population.

Labour Politics in the Present Study

The history of electoral politics in Alberta thus makes it exceedingly unrealistic to expect much evidence of support for the N.D.P. among the manual workers in the present study. Nonetheless, the 'bourgeois' tendencies frequently ascribed to skilled craftsmen and their organizations -- and for which there appears to be local historical evidence -- do suggest a basic hypothesis regarding the political sensibilities of the craft and non-craft workers that make up the sample. It can be anticipated that any support the N.D.P. might receive in the form of voting behavior and party identification is more likely to come from the unskilled workers than the craftsmen.

However, the first point that needs to be made is that the following analysis off workers' political preferences takes place within a context in which political issues are not vested with any great immediate significance. This is evidenced by the fact that respondents are considerably less forthcoming with their views on politics than they are with their views on work. In turn, the relative paucity of information and illustrative quotations provided in this Chapter compared with the preceeding two Chapters is a reflection of this point.

That said, a closed choice question designed to find out just how important or otherwise politics and political issues are to respondents does reveal that interest in politics is directly related to skill level (Table 26).

TABLE 26

Interest in Politics by Skill Level and Company

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Very Interested	66%	66%	39%	50%
Quite Interested				
Not Very Interested	33	34	60	51
Not at All Interested				
TOTAL N	9	41	38	8

In both plants, the tradesmen express a greater interest in the political process than the nontradesmen. Furthermore, while there is no significant difference between the two craft groups, it is clear that the unskilled men at Glyberforce are the major source of political estrrangement: 60% of this group are either 'not very' or 'not at all' interested in politics. Their attitudes to politics and political parties run the gamut from indifference to outright hostility, though the prevailing mood is one of suspicion and cynicism:

> "I don't know anything about them...I don't have an interest...None of my friends have anything to do with that. (Fork-lift Truck Driver, aged 19)
>
> "...I don't follow anything too much, so when it comes time to vote and everything, I just more or less hide in my shell." (Packer, aged 21)
>
> "Not very interested, unfortunately. There have been some issues that have come up, that, you know, I've perked up and taken notice of, but generally, I don't care because I don't feel they take any notice. Maybe that's the wrong attitude I take and that's why they ignore us." (Talley-Packer, aged 30)
>
> "They all promise everything and you can get nothing -- except trouble." (Fork-lift Trucker Driver, aged 20)
>
> "To me they are crooks. They always say one thing and they do another. I don't know, it's very hard to find somebody who really wants to get the country up. It's very hard." (Facing-attendant, aged 39)

Voting Behavior and Party Identification

The estrangement of the unskilled workers from the political process is similarly reflected in the differing voting behaviours of the craft and non-craft workers. Looking at both Provincial and Federal voting patterns (Table 27), it is quite clear that the most significant finding is less the actual differences in political party preferences than the fact that the unskilled workers in both plants are less likely to have voted at all.

TABLE 27

Voting Behaviour by Skill Level and Company

1979 Provincial Election

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Progressive Conservative (PC)				
Liberal	40%	64%	52%	50%
Social Credit				
N.D.P.	30	27	10*	10
Did not vote	30	9	39	40
TOTAL N	10	45	31	10
Not Eligible to vote	1	2	5	0

1979 Federal Election

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Progressive Conservative				
Liberal	30%	71%	56%	60%
Social Credit				
N.D.P.	30	24	13*	0
Did not vote	40	4	31	40
TOTAL N	10	45	32	10
Not Eligible to vote	1	2	4	0

* Includes one man who voted for either the Communist Party of Canada or the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist). The respondent declined to disclose which one he had actually supported. His vote is included here on the grounds that a Communist Party supporter is closer ideologically to the N.D.P. than he is to any of the three Parties of the Right.

Overall, 33% of the non-craftsmen (31% at Glyberforce, 40% at Airfix) did not vote in the 1979 Federal Election, a proportion that rose to 39% (39% for Glyberforce, 40% at Airfix) for the Provincial Election held the same year. Although the younger men showed a greater disinclination to vote than the older ones, age was a less important correlate of non-voting than skill level. Thus the group least likely to vote were the under 30 non-craftsmen, and the older craftsmen. These variations between the occupational groups parallel the differences found in the responses to the preceeding question. Interest in politics and predilection for voting depends upon both occupational status and age. Skilled craftsmen report both a greater interest in politics and a greater likelihood of voting than do the non-craftsmen; and within the craft and non-craft categories, the over 30's are more politically interested and active than the under 30's. The net result is that even before its ideological direction is examined, it is known that the vote of the representatives in the sample of the bottom segment of the working class has not even been mobilized. This is not the stuff of which radical social movements are made.

Still, although the propensity among the unskilled to vote is limited, this does not rule out the possibility that the voting that does occur conforms to expectations of an inverse relationship between skill level and 'Left' party preferences. The evidence, however, suggests otherwise: the actual voting patterns of workers do not provide much indication that the 'proletarian' commitments of the unskilled men are very well developed. The limited support for the N.D.P. that is forthcoming emanates from the craft ranks rather than the unskilled workers. Overall, 31% of the voting tradesmen supported the N.D.P. in the Provincial Election (3 out of 7 at Glyberforce, 12 out of 41 at Airfix), compared with 16% of the unskilled voters (3 out of 19 at Glyberforce, 1 out of 6 at Airfix). Federal voting follows a similar pattern: 29% of the craftsmen who voted were inclined to support the N.D.P. (3 out of 6 at Glyberforce, 11 out of 43 at Airfix), whereas only 11% of the unskilled men voted for them (3 out of 22 at Glyberforce; none at Airfix).

The slight craft support for the N.D.P. notwithstanding, it is fairly clear that in a province which has given such overwhelming support, both provincially and federally, to the P.C.'s, there is very little that is distinctice about the voting patterns of the skilled and unskilled men in the sample. Those who vote tend to support the P.C.'s in numbers not much smaller than those in non-manual occupations.

The pattern of respondents voting behaviour can be characterized in terms of two distinctive features. Firstly, the reluctance of the unskilled men to vote at all; and secondly, the indication that the small amount of support that is forthcoming for the N.D.P. is more likely to come from tradesmen than non-tradesmen. A further question corroborates this interpretation of the pattern of variation in political orientation among the sample. The item concerned probed workers' political party identifications. Respondents were asked: "In general, do you consider yourself to be a supporter of the P.C.'s, Liberals, N.D.P., Socreds or none of them." The answers, presented in Table 28, mirror the earlier findings.

Among all four groups, a significantly large minority of men do not identify with or support, any particular political party. This lack of identification was frequently explained by the statement, "I support the

TABLE 28

Party Identification by Skill Level and Company

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
P.C.				
Liberal	22%	41%	47%	50%
Social Credit				
N.D.P.	33	23	8*	0
No Identification	44	36	44	50
TOTAL N	9	39	36	8

* See earlier comment

man not the party", or, just as frequently, by an expressed total disinterest in politics, an attitude particularly pronounced among the young, unskilled Glyberforce workers. Of those who are more definite in their political identifications, there again is the indication that skilled workers in both plants are more inclined to endorse the N.D.P. than are the unskilled men. In fact, members of both craft groups are more likely to identify with the N.D.P. than any other political party. But in terms of the overall sample, the craft-N.D.P. connection is an aberration, a form of political deviance (Parkin, 1967). The overall picture is of Alberta as a Province largely bereft of labour politics; this is probably most strongly evidenced by the fact that the small number of party identifiers among the non-tradesmen tend to be either P.C.s or Liberals.

The Perception of Labour Politics

This last point received further confirmation when the responses to two items designed to see whether or not workers perceived and legitimized the connection between the industrial and political dimensions of their lives in capitalist society were examined. Firstly, respondents were asked whether or not they felt that Unions should try and influence peoples' views about politics. Interpreted (correctly) by many respondents as a probe of their feelings about trade union support for the N.D.P., the majority felt that influencing workers' political opinions was not, or should not be, part of a trade union's modus operandi. This viewpoint was held by 87% of the unskilled Glyberforce workers, 86% of the Airfix craftsmen, 78% of the Glyberforce maintenance craftsmen, and 71% of the Airfix non-craftsmen. The following are illustrative comments:

> "They should be separate completely. I just do not agree with the N.D.P. and the Trade Unions being together at all." (Avionics Inspector, Airfix, aged 49)
>
> "No, I'm against that. Because I know that after paying union dues somebody was telling me that so much goes to the N.D.P. So I'm kinda against it." (Storesman, Airfix, aged 32)
>
> "No, I don't think it has anything to do with politics. The postal union is very much like that. All the communists would stand up...They would force a lot of strikes, you know, because of their political views. It's a union of the employees, not a political platform." (Packer, Glyberforce, aged 26, who had previously been an inside postal worker in Toronto)

It is evident from workers' comments that the insistance upon a demarcation between industrial and political matters is often rooted in personal experience. Indeed, this question was used by respondents in both Companies, but particularly Airfix, as an opportunity to criticize the attempts of their respective union executives (at Glyberforce dominated by the skilled maintenance men) to foster a close liason between the union and the N.D.P. For some, the contribution of the Union funds to the N.D.P. at election time is a particularly contentious issue. Here is a 38 year old Glyberforce Packer talking. He is a Union trustee -- "I just check the books...see where the money is going":

> "I got in an argument at one of our Union meetings just before the election because they wanted us to donate money to the N.D.P.; and they had been donating money before. And they came out with 'this is our policy'. And myself and the other trustee got pretty pissed off about it, and we raised a little bit of shit about it -- we didn't think the Union had any right to donate any of that goddam money without checking with the membership first. And so, as it turned out, we didn't donate any money this year. And we will not donate any money next year -- at least if I can help it."

At Airfix, there had been a time when it was official Union policy to financially support the N.D.P.: not any more, as one long-term employee of the Company explains:

> "We had a great squabble over it quite a number of years ago when one particular President tried to bring this in, and the membership took an exception to it in no uncertain terms. He was all for having so much deducted from dues to go to...the N.D.P."

That this policy has not been reversed in the intervening years was confirmed by the current Union vice-president, who was part of the Airfix sample.

The second question dealing with this theme was introduced towards the end of the interview. After the topic of 'class' had been brought up and discussed, respondents were asked whether or not they felt that members of the working-class should support a particular political party (Table 29).

As Table 29 indicates, most respondents rebuff the suggestion that working-class status entails a class-specific political orientation that is manifested in support for a self-consciously working-class party.

TABLE 29

Attitude Towards Working-Class Support for a Specific Political Party by Skill Level and Company

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Working class should support specific party	50%	31%	32%	0
Working class should not support specific party	50	66	58	80
Don't Know	0	3	10	20
TOTAL N	8	35	31	5

If support believed in, which party:

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE
P.C.	25%	18%	40%
Liberals	0	9	20
N.D.P.	50	55	30
Don't Know	25	18	10
TOTAL N	4	11	10

Most workers, irrespective of their position in the occupational structure, do not feel that working class status -- either their own or others -- warrants support of a political party based on the working class. Information to be presented in the next Chapter indicates that the probable source of this widely held feeling is that respondents do not have a rigorously defined conception of class and that, accordingly, the working-class is not a distinctive entity for them.

What is perhaps more revealing is the indication that even among the smattering of respondents who do regard the linkage of industrial concerns and political platforms as legitimate, the N.D.P. is not necessarily identified as the political party most likely to champion working-class interests. Once again, this is not the sort of political orientation that is expected from potential grave-diggers of capitalism.

CONCLUSIONS

The overall pattern of worker political attitudes and behavior does not invoke a conception of a highly politicised and class conscious proletariat. However, give the historical legacy of Labour Politics in Alberta, this scarcely qualifies as an unexpected finding. Nonetheless, the information presented in this Chapter does draw attention to what may be an important source of ideological differentiation within the working class.

The two preceeding Chapters have indicated that, particularly among the younger, unskilled Glyberforce workers, there is a core of discontent with authority relationships in industry, and a consciousness of deprivation. These verbalized dissatisfactions are backed up by accounts of occasional short-term (i.e. the duration of a shift) wildcat strikes.

The reader would never know this from the political orientations of the group. It is not simply that a latent work-place radicalism fails to transform itself into support for or identification with the N.D.P.; the more important issue is that it appears that those workers most lacking in control and creativity at work do not connect the industrial and political dimensions of their lives.

Obviously, there are many reasons for the lack of political involvement and interest displayed by the unskilled workers in this study. The 12 hour shift system at Glyberforce was mentioned by some respondents as effectively denying them the opportunity to vote; and self-proclaimed ignorance of Alberta politics and personalities discouraged newcomers to the Province from voting in the Provincial elections.

Nonetheless, these situational deterrents do not totally explain the indifference with which politics is met by the unskilled workers in this study. Although the data to substantiate these speculations is lacking, these findings are consistent with both the thesis associated with Kohn (1969; 1978) and neo-marxist formulations of the consequences of workplace alienation. Kohn argues that a consequence of the more limited amounts of freedom and autonomy found in manual than in non-manual occupations is that those in manual jobs exhibit a greater conformity to external authority and a heightened sense of political powerlessness. This thesis has recently received some empirical substantiation with Canadian data (Grabb, 1981). The findings presented in this Chapter suggest that job level is a source of variation in political powerlessness within the manual occupational strata.

Similarly, various neo-Marxists have depicted a causal sequence whereby the least skilled members of the working class are cumulatively dehumanized and broken down by constant confrontations with the capitalist labour process. As a consequence, the worker retreats further and further into his own private world; his optimism gone, he jettisons any confident forecasts that he might have had about an improvement in his life conditions. Political involvement -- even at its most minimal level, voting, is one of the first casualities of this alienated response. If

Marx was correct in arguing that the prevaling conditions of capitalism resulted in alienation, he was at the same time unduly optimistic in believing that its existence would produce an aggressive resolve on the part of its victims to rid themselves of its causes: a sense of fatalism and political impotence are as marked a feature of contemporary working-class consciousness as a demonstrated desire to overthrow the offending social structure (Ollman, 1973; Mann, 1970). Put differently, workers are estranged from politics because the existing political institutions are perceived as being part of that oppressive social structure.

The situation of the unskilled workers is to be contrasted with that of the skilled craftsmen. The only political party in Canada that has ever claimed to represent the interests of subordinated groups is the N.D.P. Yet despite its claims to be based on the working class, the N.D.P. has, according to some commentators (Regenstreif, 1965 cited by Cheal 1978:327) increasingly limited its appeals to the better paid, skilled manual strata of the working class. Whether or not this is a fair and accurate assessment of the N.D.P.'s electoral strategy, we are in no position to judge. However, what can be stated fairly unequivocally is that in terms of the data at hand, the men most likely to endorse the N.D.P.'s version of social democratic socialism are the skilled craftsmen -- the group, as has already been seen, least alienated and least committed to industrial radicalism. This paradox is a potentially divisive element within the working class, and raises serious questions about the prospects for collective action among the working class. However, a no less important reason for doubting the likelihood of this development lies with the weak sense of class identity displayed by this sample of manual workers. This is the major theme of the next Chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

IMAGES OF THE CLASS STRUCTURE

The dicussion in the preceding Chapter on workers' political orientations has shifted the focus of this study. Prior to that Chapter, the information presented has been limited to workers' industrial attitudes.

It was noted in Chapter Four that there is a greater tendency in social surveys for workers to offer critical commentaries on the status quo if questions probing their perceptions are couched in situational or concrete terms rather than in terms of abstractly defined general principles. The information presented in Chapter Five can be interpreted as supporting this tendency.

Although the young unskilled men do display elements of a critical industrial consciousness, there was no indication that their industrial discontents nurtured any interest in abstract political philosophies or organised political activity. It appears, to paraphrase Parkin (1972), that any radicalism displayed by the workers in this study is restricted to the immediacy of the industrial sub-culture.

The apparent wedge between 'local' and societal contexts in workers' ideological thinking is further pursued in this Chapter. The focus is upon workers' perceptions of class and class structure. Two issues are involved here. Firstly, to what extent do workers make use of the concept of class when making sense of socially structured inequality and their overall position in society? Secondly, and more substantially, do craft and non-craft workers view the class structure, and their relative positions within it, in essentially similar or different ways?

The Empirical Study of Class and Class Consciousness

Probably the major problem in exploring workers' perceptions of class and class relationships is that sociology has not in the past operated with any well developed consensus regarding the appropriate defining qualities of the concept of class consciousness (Gallie, 1979:501). One writer has even insisted that "the term class consciousness has been used to indicate such a variety of referents that its use in sociology is almost devoid of meaning without prior definitional elaboration" (R. Hill, 1978:67). That said, a number of recent texts have proferred models of class consciousness that contain similar elements, and conceptualise its development as a series of escalating stages (Hill, 1978; Giddens, 1972; Mann, 1973; Parkin, 1972). Gidden's formulation is probably the best developed version of this thesis.

He makes an initial distinction between class awareness and class consciousness. Class awareness only presupposes the existence of values and a similar life style among the occupants of a class. It does not involve any correlated assumption that such a pattern betokens a particular class affiliation or even the recognition of other classes in society. By contrast, the concept of class consciousness is based upon notions of a cognizance of class membership and the simultaneous acknowledgment of other social classes.

But this is only the starting point; for Giddens' conceptualisation of class consciousness embraces a number of qualitatively different levels. In its most primitive form, the concept is rooted in the twofold recognition of, firstly, the existence of other classes in society and, secondly, an understanding of the factors that set one class off from others. Giddens labels this level as class identity.

The second level is conflict consciousness, in which the recognition of collective class membership is coupled with the realization that the interests of one's own class conflict with those of another class or classes.

The third level is revolutionary class consciousness, and rests upon "a recognition of the possibility of an overall reorganization in the institutional mediation of power, and a belief that such reorganization can be brought about through class action" (Giddens, 1972:113).

The relationship between the first and second stages is fairly direct and explicit: Conflict consciousness represents a sharpening and refining of the latent perception of shared interests and conflicts that characterise the earlier stage of class identification. The development of revolutionary class consciousness -- obviously a rare occurrence -- by contrast, is not a simple antecendent of conflict consciousness. Like Mann and Parkin, Giddens views revolutionary class consciousness as having its origins outside the labour process and, indeed, outside even the working class acting on its own behalf.

Although, realistically, it is likely that the present analysis will be restricted to the beginning stages -- principally class awareness and class identity -- class consciousness will be conceptualised as developing through a series of levels.

The procedure will be to report information pertaining to such topics as the number of classes perceived as existing in Canada, worker's self-placement in this overall arrangement, and the determinants of social class.

If the thesis that skill level constitutes a significant division within the working class has any empirical validity, then differences in the way skilled and unskilled workers visualize the class structure would be expected. Conversely, failure to find variations between the two groups might suggest that despite previously documented work-related differences between craft and non-craft workers, they nonetheless share -- subjectively at least -- a common class location.

The Perceptions of Class in the Present Study

The opening question posed was the following: "Some people have said that there are social classes in Canada, while other people disagree. What do you think?

It is quite apparent from Table 30 that the majority of respondents -- in all occupational groups -- view Canada as a "class" society. Overall, 80% of respondents felt that there are social classes in Canada. Irrespective of whatever else might be lacking in their understanding of class, these representatives of the "Blue-Collar" strata are sufficiently aware of the existence of class to dent the omnipotence with which statements about Canada's classless qualities are invariably treated (see, for example, Fox, 1970:223).

TABLE 30

Belief in the Existence of Classes by Company and Skill Level

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Yes	90%	83%	81%	50%
No	10	17	8	27
Don't Know	0	0	11	9
TOTAL N	10	42	37	8

Turning next to the question of the number of classes workers perceive as existing in Canada, there is again a remarkable uniformity of response. The majority of workers, skilled and unskilled alike, who had a sufficiently discernable model of the class structure see Canada as a three-class society.

TABLE 31

Perception of Number of Social Classes in Canada

By Company and Skill Level

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRIFX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
2	25%	7%	16%	20%
3	33	37	54	25
4+	10	17	5	0
Don't Know	40	39	24	63
TOTAL N	10	41	37	8

What is equally interesting about these findings is just how few respondents (12% of the total sample) adhered to what, until comparatively recently, has been regarded as the 'prototypical' working-class image of society: the dichotomous, proletarian power model (Willener, 1957; Popitz, 1969; Lockwood, 1975).

Of course, knowing where an individual places the class of his membership in comparison to other classes tells as much about his view of the overall class structure as the number of classes he is able to identify. It makes a great deal of difference whether a person sees him- or herself as a member of a middle class, or whether, in the same three class hierarchy, he places himself in a bottom subordinate class. For this reason, at the same time that respondents were asked to distinguish the main classes in Canadian society, they were also asked which of their identified classes they felt that they belonged to. (Table 32)

TABLE 32

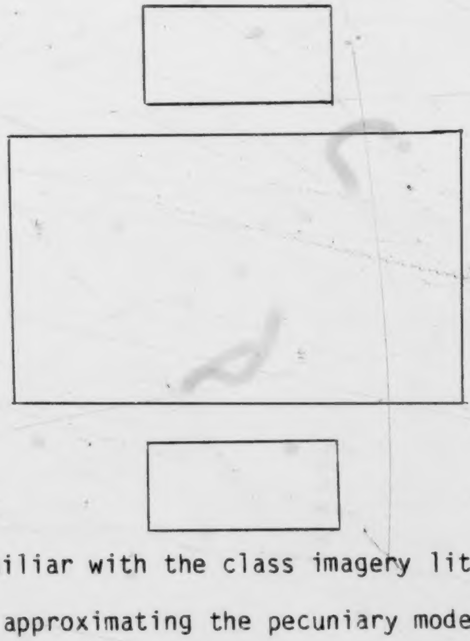
Self-Placement in the Class Structure By Company and Skill Level

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Middle	40%	37%	Top 3% 48	13%
Bottom	20	20	22	25
Don't Know	40	39	27	63
Not Clear	0	5	0	0
TOTAL N	10	41	37	8

All but one of the men who regarded Canada as a 2-class society placed themselves in the bottom category; one young worker at Glyberforce placed himself in the "Upper income class" of a two class-rich and poor dichotomy. It should perhaps also be noted that two of the 11 men who placed themselves in the bottom category of their two class model of society did not refer to that class in terms that suggest exploitation or subordination -- ideal-typical characteristics of the dichotomized 'conflict' model of society. For instance, one Glyberforce labourer's two class model of society was viewed in terms of "High Society" and the middle-class, and he was in the 'middle' class. Another unskilled man saw Canada as a two-class society based on the 'rich' and the 'less rich'; he was in the second category. The same man also held the view that a tramp anywhere else in the world was a super-tramp in Canada.

On the other hand, the majority of workers' who conceptualized Canada as a three-class society saw themselves as being part of a middle grouping or middle class, which was invariably viewed as being the largest class in society. This tendency to locate their class of membership in the middle ranks of the class structure does not vary by occupational status, either. That is to say, craft and non-craft workers are equally likely to self-locate in a broadly defined middle-class.

If the response to the opening question on class constitutes a rejection of the conventional wisdom that Canada is a classless society, responses to the subsequent questions have done little to undermine the related orthodoxy that Canada is a predominately middle-class society. It appears, to paraphrase and appropriate Mackenzie's interpretation of his data and applying it to my own, that most respondents, craft and non-craft alike, view Canada as a middle-class society, and they are part of that middle-class (Mackenzie, 1973:125). A large middle-class is thus the central element in their overall gestalt of the class structure. This modal class schema may be represented diagramatically as follows:



Readers familiar with the class imagery literature will recognize this pattern as approximating the pecuniary model of society held by Goldthorpe and Lockwood's affluent car workers:

> The central tendency is for membership to be claimed in a class, often seen as newly formed, which takes in a wide range of all wage and salary earners -- and is, therefore, describable as (literally) the working class -- and which, even if not actually ranked in an intermediate position, is still felt to be made up of persons with "middling" economic standards...This class is then invariably distinguished from some higher class, or classes, whose economic superiority is believed to be such as to put their members in a qualitatively different situation; and sometimes, too, from a lower class of deprived, undeserving, or disadvantaged persons, which tends similarly to be accorded a "special" character (Goldthorpe, 1970:12; cited in Low-Beer, 1978:138)

That workers in Edmonton hold essentially middle-class images is illustrated by the following exchanges. In the first example, the respondent -- an Airfix aircraft electrician -- has a general, albeit unfocused, view of the social stratification hierarchy:

> J.R.T.: What do you think are the major social classes in this country today?
>
> You've got the rich, the poor, unskilled workers, unskilled workers (pause) I'm trying to think of a word to describe people that don't want to work, like unemployment (laughs)! -- 'cos I know alot -- unemployment and welfare...
>
> J.R.T.: What social class would you say you were in?
>
> That's hard to say -- there are so many.
>
> J.R.T.: Of the ones that you've mentioned, which would you see yourself as belonging to?
>
> Myself as being in?...I've mentioned myself as a skilled worker. I'm not rich and I'm not poor -- I'm just middle-class...the middle-class varies too much...where are the limits? Where do you start from, for the middle-class? I'd say I'm average. But I'm a skilled worker.

This second respondent is a forklift truck driver at Glyberforce. Having agreed that there are social classes in Canada, I asked him what he felt were the major social classes:

> I dunno, like, I'd say there's the wealthy and what you'd call the normal, and there's the poor.
>
> J.R.T.: What social class would you say you were in?
>
> I'd say normal.

A similar picture is offered by this Airfix craftsman:

> J.R.T.: What do you think are the major classes in this country today?
>
> Upper-level or high-income, mid-income, and low-income.
>
> J.R.T.: What social class would you say you were in?
>
> I couldn't say that I'm a low income -- we don't fit in to the High income either. I would have to say we are probably at the bottom of the mid-income group.

Not surprisingly, he views income as the prime determinant of class membership: "My own personal opinion is, I would have to say, it is strictly a matter of finance."

Although the interview information does reveal that respondents do operate with a rudimentary image of class, what the questions cannot measure is the degree of importance workers' attach to their pictures of the class structure. This is an important issue. The question that remains largely unanswered is just how salient 'class' is as a source of personal identity when compared with other components of personal identity. Certainly when asking workers directly about their perceptions of the class structure, the researcher is able to extract a reasonably discernable pattern of response. But this does not mean that the interviewe invests any great significance in the conceptualisation that he has been directed to identify and comment upon.

It is my impression that my respondents did not, in fact, invest much personal significance in their class schemas. This might be evidenced by the fact that respondents found it easier to agree in general that classes exist in Canada than to provide a clear picture of that class structure and their personal place within it.

Similarly, their skeletal views on class might be taken as evidence that manual workers do not necessarily have a clear and consistent definition of class that forms the basis of their understanding of the overall social structure. This does not mean that they are unaware of, or indifferent to, exploitation, deprivation, divisions and conflicts that characterise all unequal societies. What it does mean, however, is that the concept of class does not necessarily "explain" the system of social stratification for those who occupy subordinate (or superordinate) positions in the social stratification hierarchy. As two other researchers have put it, "the feeling of subordination, discrimination, unfairness, and hostility which are the essence of class opposition...can arise in a number of sectors of social life and be expressed in terms in which the word "class" is never used" (Moorhouse and Chamberlain, 1974:390).

Despite -- or maybe because of -- their weak class identifications -- there is little evidence that the craft and non-craft workers vary much in their perceptions of the class structure. The essential uniformity of their class imagery carries over into their feelings about social mobility. Those workers in the two companies who recognized the existence of social classes were asked: Do you think that many people move from one class to another these days?" (Table 33)

TABLE 33

Perceptions of Possibility of Social Mobility by Company and Skill Level

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Yes	75%	63%	54%	75%
No	25	38	40	14
Don't Know	0	0	6	0
TOTAL N	8	32	35	7

The results presented in Table 33 reveal some slight variation between the occupational groups with regard to perceptions of social mobility. Overall, the skilled craftsmen are slightly more enthusiastic about the possibilities of social mobility than the non-craftsmen (65% against 52%). The small number of Glyberforce maintenance men are the group most likely to believe that social mobility is possible, whilst the most restrained assessment comes from the unskilled men in the same plant. However, the size of these differences is not overly impressive, and the conclusion must be that social mobility is not a feature of class imagery that particularly distinguishes craft from non-craft workers.

Almost without exception, previous Canadian studies of working-class imagery have used forced-choice measures to probe workers' class identifications (see, for example, Rinehart and Okraku, 1974; Coburn and Edwards, 1976; Keddie, 1980). The shortcomings of this approach have been well documented. The essence of the critique is that forced choice schemas rest on the largely unproven assumption that the predetermined class categories hold the same meaning for all respondents that they hold for the investigator (Gordon, 1958; Goldthorpe and Lockwood, 1963).

However, a focus of the present investigation is respondents' perceptions of the relative position of skilled and non-skilled workers in the class structure; and although classificatory schemas imposed upon respondents are unlikely to provide an accurate picture of their class images, as an approximate measure of how members of different occupational groups locate themselves and others in the class structure, the methodology has advantages that outweigh its disadvantages (cf. Mackenzie 1973:119). Hence it was decided to include in the interview schedule a question that obliges respondents to identify with either the working or middle-class. Essentially a refinement of the Centers classificatory schema (1949), the following question was posed to respondents: "Some people seem to think there are 3 major social classes in Canada: the upper-class, the middle class, and the working class. If you had to choose one of these terms, which would you say you were in?" (Table 34)

TABLE 34

Social Class Identification Using Forced Choice Classification

	SKILLED			UNSKILLED		
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	TOTAL SKILLED	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	TOTAL UNSKILLED
Middle-class	44%	53%	51%	44%	50%	44%
Working-class	56	42	44	56	50	56
Don't Know	0	6		0		
TOTAL N	9	36	45	39	6	45

As Table 34 reveals, one of the effects of introducing a forced choice item is that it reduces the amount of non-response that open-ended questioning on class produces. Inviting workers to respond to pre-defined class categories clearly eliminates much of the doubt and uncertainty upon which non-response to the original open-ended class questions is largely based.

In terms of the substantive issues, there is some evidence to indicate a slightly greater working class identification on the part of the unskilled workers than the craftsmen (56% against 44%). There is also a converse, though less pronounced, tendency for a greater middle-class identification among the tradesmen than among the non-tradesmen (51% against 44%). Significantly, the strongest contrast in class identifications is between the skilled aircraft men and the unskilled workers at Glyberforce: (53% of the former group identify with the middle-class, against 44% of the Glyberforce men). Conversely, 56% of this group identify with the working-class, compared with 42% of the skilled aircraft workers.

Nonetheless, these findings need to be treated very cautiously. Firstly, the differences in the class identifications of the craft and non-craft workers are not very great. Secondly -- and this tends to underscore the weaknesses intrinsic to the methodology -- it was apparent that respondents did not always draw a very sharp distinction in their own minds between the middle-class and the working-class; and that even in those instances when a distinction was made, it was not necessarily accorded very much significance. AS the following comments indicate, many respondents regard the terms 'middle-class' and 'working-class' simply as different labels for describing the same phenomena -- occupancy of a generously defined grouping in the middle of the class hierarchy:

> "Now I would have to ask what (is) the middle-class? I'd consider the middle-class as working-class, you know...myself, the middle-class is the working-class, and I'd class myself as middle-class." (Aircraft electrician, Airfix)

> "I'd say the working middle-class (laughs)...That's what the middle-class is as far as I'm concerned." (Packer, Glyberforce)

> "I'm definitely in the working-class.
> But...income-wise, I'm in the middle-class.
> (Aircraft mechanic, Airfix)

> "Working-class...because that is what I do a third of my time, I work...almost all of us are in the working class." (Hydraulics mechanic, Airfix)

Finally, the following respondent's reflections on the contrast between the forced-choice schema and his own three-class model of society provides a good illustration of the contours and characteristics of the pecuniary image:

> "Well, I'm in the working-class, eh? I don't think that's the way it is really. You say there's three classes, eh? I say there's the lower class, the middle-class, and what I say is the lower-class is the most unfortunate people that don't have a job. Most of them, it is through no fault of their own, and some of them, they will never work. We have to be honest about that...eh? Now that's the lower class.
>
> And then it's a monetary way we are putting this, O.K.? This is monetary, O.K. This is what I named the three classes on. It's the lower class, the middle-class, and the upper-class.
>
> Now my interpretation of the middle class is the working-class that are making out fairly reasonable -- they are not doctors or lawyers or something like that, but they are the working-class, eh? This is the tradesmen and what not, eh?
>
> Now the lower-class, like I said before, are the ones who are not working or just working on the minimum wages and struggling -- which I feel sorry for.
>
> And the other class is the doctors, the lawyers, and the professional ones, more or less, eh.

The next aspect of workers' class imagery to be examined concerned their perception of the determinants of the important breaks or divides in the class structure. As Table 35 reveals, factors related to position in the division of labour do not appear to shape either craft or non-craft workers perceptions of the basic contours of the social structure.

TABLE 35

Perceived Determinants of Social Class
By Skill Level and Company*

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Education	0%	24%	10%	33%
Money	71	64	45	66
Ambition	0	3	6	0
Life Style	0	9	3	0
Possessions	14	21	23	0
Dress/Speech	0	9	26	0
Type of Job	0	9	10	0
Other	29	45	48	100
TOTAL N	7	33	31	3

* More than one item could be given so the percentages may total to more than 100%.

Only a very small number of respondents (8% overall) clearly and unambiguously invoke factors associated with work or the occupational structure as determinants of class position. This pattern is similarly found in the responses to the forced-choice class item. At the same time that respondents were presented with the forced choice schema, they were asked to explain their choices. This was done with the aid of the following questions:

1. You wouldn't then call yourself a working (or middle) class person -- why is that?
2. So what sort of people are in the working (or middle) class -- how would you describe a working (or middle) class person?
3. How about the middle (or working) class -- how would you describe a middle (or working) class person?

Although the total number of respondents is insufficiently large to justify presentation in table form, it is nonetheless clear that neither craft nor non-craft workers necessarily distinguish between the middle-class and working-class on the basis of occupational differences. Less than half the respondents overall saw the middle-class/working class distinction in terms of either the sociologically familiar manual/non-manual division or -- invoking a version of embourgeoisement thesis -- as a bifurcation between those with trade qualifications and those without them. Most workers, regardless of skill level, are more inclined to view class differences in terms of material attributes, education, or income.

It has been argued that references to money are notoriously difficult to interpret (Platt, 1971). Do such references imply that class differences rest upon consumption patterns of capacities? (as embourgeoisement theorists and identifiers of a 'new' working class, respectively, suggest); or is money simply the most readily available symbol for a whole range of factors -- power, inequality -- that set members of the working class apart from occupants of other, and invariably, superordinate classes? (as other writers have suggested) (Westergaard, 1970; Moorhouse, 1976).

Although this problem is not easily resolved, responses to a forced choice item do suggest that respondents in the present study view class divisions as being determined by consumption capacities rather than position in the division of labour.

Respondents were presented with three statements, each reflecting a distinctive overall image of the class structure. They were then asked which of the statements came closest to their own perceptions. The three statements were:

A. There are several classes in Canada; although the upper classes run the country and industry, it is in everybody's interest that they do so.

B. In Canada today, there are basically two main classes -- bosses and workers -- and these classes have opposing interests.

C. Most people in Canada today belong to the same class -- and the only important difference is how much money they earn.

Mention should be made of the fact that some respondents felt that none of these vignettes very accurately captured the defining characteristics of the Canadian class structure for them; others felt that some, but not all, elements of a given vignette corresponded with their own views; for instance, some respondents did feel that there are basically two main classes in Canada, but did not necessarily think that they had opposing interests.

That said, most respondents had little trouble in agreeing with the third statement -- the depiction of the sentiments and world view that characterises the pecuniary model of society (cf. Lockwood, 1966, 1975).

Although the unskilled Glyberforce workers were, as a group, most likely to favour the proletarian image, only a minority (23%) of them held this viewpoint.

TABLE 36

Images of Society by Skill Level and Company

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
A	27%	17%	18%	20%
B	18	13	23	10
C	55	65	59	60
None	0	4	0	10
TOTAL N	11	46	39	10

It should perhaps be noted at this juncture that the inclination to deny the import of social class -- an attitude captured, I would suggest, in the pecuniary vignette -- is not unique in Canada. When the same three statements were presented to British shipbuilding workers (Cousins and Brown, 1975) -- an occupational group deemed archetypically proletarian, and therefore highly likely to hold a dichotomised, conflict view of society -- they instead made the pecuniary model their modal choice. The factors that encourage workers to select, in force-choice formats, the pecuniary model, may thus well have a high degree of cultural universality.

The overwhelming homogeneity of these responses strongly suggests that not only do skilled and unskilled workers share a similar view of the class structure -- one that revolves around consumptive capacities -- but also that such a gestalt is the outcome of a perception of a shared location in the division of labour. Responses to two further items provide some confirmation of this thesis.

Directly addressed to the relative class situation of craft and non-craft manual workers, the following question was presented to the sample: "Some people think that many unskilled and semi-skilled workers are doing as well these days as skilled tradesmen.

The results, presented in Table 37, show that overall the skilled tradesmen are slightly more inclined than the unskilled workers to regard the latter group as doing as well as themselves.

TABLE 37

Perception of Comparative Economic Situation of Skilled and Unskilled Workers by Skill Level and Company

	SKILLED			UNSKILLED		
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	TOTAL SKILLED	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	TOTAL UNSKILLED
Doing as well	78%	46%	55%	37%	33%	37%
Not doing as well	22	40	36	49	67	50
Some/Depends	0	9	7	9	0	8
Don't Know	0	8	2	6	0	5
TOTAL N	9	35	44	35	3	38

While half (50%) of the unskilled men felt that they are not doing as well as tradesmen, a slightly larger proportion (55%) of the craftsmen felt otherwise. Although at first blush this finding is a reversal of what might have been expected, the comments of some of the craftsmen illustrate the essentially conditional nature of their favourable assessment of the class situation of non-craft workers. In large part, they felt that non-tradesmen were able to do as well as themselves only by working long hours, in unattractive environments (Fort McMurray was frequently cited), at back-breaking work (construction and the oil rigs were the most favoured examples). The non-craftsmen offered the same kinds of qualified statement when evaluating the relative positions of skilled and non-skilled workers.

But more important than the perceptions of the relative economic positions of skilled and non-skilled workers was the question of the extent to which respondents felt that the two manual groupings shared a similar class location. Accordingly, the question probing workers about their perceptions of the relative economic situation of the two strata was immediately followed up by a further questions that asked: "Would you say unskilled and semi-skilled workers are in the same social class as skilled tradesmen?"

The results, presented in Table 38, are unambiguous. Craft and non-craft workers alike see themselves as occupying a common location in the class structure.

The explanation for the lack of differences between the class images of craft and non-craft workers is, I would suggest, a product of two closely related factors. Both groups of workers see themselves as occupying the same social class. Regardless of whether this is or is not an objectively correct assessment of their respective positions in society, this is how the skilled and non-skilled workers in the present study perceive the situation. Their similar views on various aspects of class reflect their overall assessment of a shared class location. However -- and this brings us to the second point -- the boundaries of the

TABLE 38

Perceived Class Situation of Craftsmen and Non-Skilled Workers

By Skill Level and Company

	SKILLED			UNSKILLED		
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	TOTAL SKILLED	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	TOTAL UNSKILLED
In the same class	100%	73%	77%	71%	80%	72%
Not in the same class	0	22	18	13	20	14
Depends	0	3	3	13	0	12
Don't Know	0	3	3	3	0	2
TOTAL N	6	33	39	38	5	43

class of respondents' membership are sufficiently broadly defined as to almost ensure a shared occupancy of a large central or middle class. Since neither the divisions based on skill nor manual-non-manual distinctions were accorded much importance, membership of the middle class included the majority of all wage and salary earners, and excluded only the very rich at the top of the social structure, and the unemployed, and those on welfare, at the bottom. If respondents see themselves as occupying a similar position in the class structure, then it is perhaps not surprising that they likewise share similar views on class.

Patterns of Sociability

However, what remains to be seen is whether a shared perception of a similar class location betokens a concomitant enthusiasm for interaction between the two groups conducted on the basis of social equality.

In order to answer this question, information was gathered on the occupational status of up to three of each respondent's closest friends.

TABLE 39

Occupations of Friends by Skill Level and Company

	SKILLED		UNSKILLED	
	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX	GLYBERFORCE	AIRFIX
Intermediate	21%	18%	11%	42%
Self-Employed	11	6	4	0
White collar	21	20	7	25
Skilled craftsmen	42	38	9	25
Other Manual	5	5	63	8
Other	6	13	0	0
TOTAL percent	100	100	100	100
TOTAL Number of Friends	19	89	82	12

The first thing to note is that craft and non-craft workers alike do not readily include each other in out-of-work social relationships. This is particularly the case with the unskilled men at Glyberforce, whose friendships are very largely restricted to other non-skilled workers: 63% of the total number of friends they mentioned were unskilled manual workers. For the skilled craftsmen the pattern was slightly different. Although at both Glyberforce and Airfix, the most likely source of out-of-work friendships was other craftsmen, they were also quite likely -- and considerably more so than the non-craftsmen -- to have social relationships with those in white-collar and supervisory occupations. Mackenzie's view that skilled workers occupy a distinct position in the class structure is based in part on the finding that their out-of-work social relationships were confined to other craftsmen; they had very little social contact with other unskilled manual workers or those in white-collar occupations. These Canadian findings, by contrast, evidence quite definite indications of ladders to the non-manual middle-class by way of friendship patterns. However, the quite substantial differences in the pattern of sociability enjoyed by tradesmen and unskilled workers appear to have only a slight bearing upon feelings of class membership and other aspects of class imagery.

CONCLUSIONS

Two main conclusions can be drawn from the information presented in this Chapter. Firstly, position in the division of labour is not related to any significant variation in workers' class imagery. Most workers, craft and non-craft alike, hold varients of what Goldthorpe and Lockwood have called the pecuniary model of society. Secondly, the overriding impression conveyed by respondents in the course of the interviews is that class is not a concept of central importance to their everyday thinking.

This discussion of workers' class imagery completes the data analysis. In the concluding Chapter, the theoretical questions that have informed this research will be re-examined in light of the information collected from this sample of Edmonton craft and non-craft workers.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SKILLED AND UNSKILLED WORKERS IN THE CLASS STRUCTURE

Summary of Findings

This study was conceived as a test of the thesis that skill level functions as a source of variation in social consciousness within the manual working-class. Based on information collected from samples of craft and non-craft workers, the research has sought to explore intra-class variations on a range of subjective dispositions that make up working-class consciosuness. what is the fruit of this endeavor?

First of all, the ways in which the craft and non-craft workers experience their actual job tasks was very much in line with the typifications presented in previous research. The unskilled workers, particularly the younger ones, adhered to a constellation of work attitudes that has previously been described as instrumentalism. Simultaneously, the tradesmen exhibited a degree of identification and involvement with their jobs that has elsewhere been typified as craft consciousness.

However, it was emphasized in the opening Chapter that for students of social stratification there is an automatic assumption of a direct linkage between experiences in the workplace and other industrial, political and societal attitudes. The plausibility of this argument notwithstanding, it is not very well supported by the present data. Overall, the picture of working-class consciousness that emerges from this study is a murky one: attitudes about work, industry, politics, and class do not unequivocally stamp either craftsmen or non-craftsmen as 'bourgeois' or 'proletarian'.

Looking first of all at industrial attitudes, neither the instrumentalism of the unskilled workers nor the more intrinsic job involvements of the craftsmen are associated in any straightforward one-to-one relationship with workers' perceptions and evaluations of their employers. The generally negative assessment that the unskilled workers at Glyberforce offer of their immediate job tasks is not consistently reflected in their evaluations of their employers. More specifically, the unrewarding nature of their jobs does not translate into a systematically critical perspective on management. Conversely, the positive job identifications and involvements of the skilled aircraftsmen do not produce a particularly sympathetic view of management. In contrast, similar characteristically craft work attitudes at Glyberforce inspired, on the part of the maintenance men, the most favourable perceptions of management.

Workers' broader industrial ideologies were no more likely to evince a straightforward pattern. The influence of skill level is such that, mediated by age, the most radical workers in the sample are the young unskilled men at the aircraft repair plant. Anomolous as this finding is, its significance is over-shadowed by the fact that ideology -- or at least its manifestation as a coherent, consistent, 'Left-Right' dimension -- does not appear to hold that much salience for the sample as a whole. This is evidenced, it is argued, by the low correlation scores between the 'Left' and 'Right' items on the ideology scale. That workers' ideological thinking is not well integrated is further illustrated by their political attitudes. The men most clearly dissatisfied with their work -- the young, unskilled workers -- participate least in the formal political process: job dissatisfaction does not create N.D.P. voting and identifiers.

The documented differences in work attitudes between craft and non-craft workers failed to produce any significant variation in class imagery. This finding can be interpreted as providing support for those theorists, discussed in Chapter one, who argue that, in contrast to the historical working-class, the modern working-class shares a commonality of interests which is reflected in a shared consciousness of class. That said, what most respondents share with regard to class is a feeling that it is not a particularly significant aspect of their understanding of social inequality.

The almost complete absence of any evidence indicating that either skilled or unskilled workers conceive of, or respond, to socially structured inequally in class terms can be explained by reference to Parkin's thesis that the development of class consciousness -- as opposed to other forms of social consciousness -- requires the education of the working-class through contacts with radical political parties and radical trade unions (Parkin, 1972: Chapter 3). The lack of a radical meaning system in Canada leaves Canadian workers unprotected against the hegemonic influence of the dominant meaning system which, among other things, can be guaranteed to deny or downplay the impact of class as an explanation of social inequality. The effect that this has upon workers' consciousness is best illustrated by the unskilled Glyberforce workers.

Denied access to the moral strictures of the radical meaning system, the oppositional content of their thinking is forged by the face-to-face interactions of the workplace setting which, to co-opt Parkin's phrase, "is of purely parochial significance". There is litle doubt that the experience of working for Glyberforce is an alienating one for the young unskilled men. However, the nascent oppositional qualities of their ideological thinking is based upon, and limited to, particularized relationships with the most junior members of the plants' chain of command. Foremen and supervisors are not viewed as the shop-floor representatives of an exploiting class. Nor does the workplace seem to provide a viable learning experience for interpreting and responding to social, as opposed to industrial inequities; 'work' and 'non-work' manifest themselves as discrete and segmented aspects of workers' lives (Mann, 1973:20). This segmentation does little to nurture class consciousness which is societal in scope, and entails a systematic understanding of the structure of inequality originating from the capital-labour relationship.

A class perspective on inequality is a product of a continuous exposure to a radical meaning system. That the social consciousness of Canadian workers is largely bereft of references to class is a reflection of the weakness -- some would say the non existence -- in Canadian society of a radical meaning system.

Nonetheless, the findings from the present study also indicate that when attention is focused upon the type of social consciousness generated by workers' direct experiences in the workplace, Canadian workers are no more inherently conservative or supportive of the status quo than workers in, say, Britain. The bulk of the items which make up the ideology scale described in chapter four were drawn, it was pointed out, from a study of unskilled manual workers in Peterborough, Britain. A comparison of the respective ideology scores reveals that proletarianism -- atleast, its industrial variant -- is stronger among the Edmonton sample than among the Peterborough sample. This finding is modest testomony to the relative strength and import in Canada of the industrial sub-culture as a source of accomodative working-class values. It also substantiates Mann's argument that the working class is most likely to endorse values rejecting of the dominant normative order if those values are measured, not in abstract class terms, but in situational terms that relate to workers' everyday experiences (Mann, 1970).

The fact that class is but a peripheral aspect of workers' social consciousness re-iterates what is probably the major finding to emerge from this study: namely, that the relationship between skill level and social consciousness is a highly problematic one that does not break down into a simple typology of "craft" and "proletarian" consciousness. Undoubtedly, a major reason for this lies in the way in which the structural position of unskilled and, particularly, skilled workers in the division of labour has been conceptualized theoretically in the literature.

The conception of class employed in the present research is taken from David Lockwood's study, "The Blackcoated Worker" (1958). In that book, Lockwood defines class position in terms of three main elements:

> "Under 'class position' will be included the following factors. First, 'market situation', that is to say the economic position narrowly conceived, consisting of source and size of income, degree of job-security, and opportunity for upward occupational mobility. Secondly, 'work situation', the set of social relationships in which the individual is involved at work by virtue of his position in the division of labour. And finally, 'status situation' or the position of the individual in the hierarchy of prestige in the society at large. The experiences originating in these three spheres may be seen as the principal determinants of class consciousness. 'Market situation' and 'work situation' comprise what Marx essentially understood as class position (Lockwood, 1958:15 emphasis added).

In this view of class, we are encouraged to understand that an individual's position in the division of labour -- indicated by occupation -- is associated with particular work and market situations. The experiences deriving from the work and market situation are then seen as mutually reinforcing, and providing the material basis for a distinctive type of social consciousness.

What I want to suggest is that thus conceptualisation -- the theoretical stock-in-trade of most empirical studies of manual workers carried out in Britain over the past two decades -- does not adequately allow for the possibility that work and market experiences might not be reinforcing -- that they might, in fact, offer contradictory experiences. Let me illustrate what I mean by reference to the original Labour aristocracy thesis.

It is clear that the relatively advantaged position of skilled craftsmen in the class structure depends upon positive experiences in both work and market settings (Hobsbawn, 1964:273). In terms of the present study, this formulation does fairly accurately describe the situation of the skilled Glyberforce maintenance men: they are the occupational group most advantaged in terms of both work and market factors and, overall, the most socially integrated. For the skilled aircraftmen, on the other hand, generally positive feelings about job tasks go hand-in-hand with a sense of deprivation and unsecurity about their market situation -- principally size and regularity of income. They are not particularly well paid by craft standards, and are highly vulnerable to fluctuations in their earnings because of the nature of the aircraft industry and its product market. So while the skilled aircraft workers' work situation might engender the social integration and moderation predicted by the Labour Aristocracy theorists, the size and -- more importantly -- the regularity of their income mitigates against such a development. If the various material elements that ideal - typically contribute to the relatively privileged situation of craftworkers do not, in fact, empirically coalesce, then this opens the way for the emergence of non-bourgeois forms of craft consciousness.

The lack of fit between the work and market components of skilled craftmens' overall class position thus raises doubts about the utility of the labour aristocracy thesis. The tenability of this thesis becomes even less certain when account is taken of the fact that craft occupations are disproportionately located in those industries where unsecurity is endemic -- industries which are notoriously dependent upon contracting and subcontracting, where the volume of business activity and therefore level of employment fluctuate widely. The aircraft industry epitomizes the precariousness of employment in a craft industry. According to three American Commentators, Aircraft workers' jobs "historically have been among the most unsecure of all manufacturing jobs in the United States" (Bluestone, Jordan, and Sullivan, 1981:1)

On this evidence, it becomes clear that not only do aircraft workers' work and market situations fail to compliment each other, but, in fact, may be directly antithetical. That is, they are employed in an industry which demands high levels of skill, provides reasonably high levels of pay, but which is also unable to guarantee job security. Given the antithetical nature of craftmen's work and market situations, it is no longer surprising to find that their social perspectives are not those of a group keenly aware of their privileged position in the class structure. Indeed subsequent events at Airfix have borne out the skilled Aircraftmen's cautious views of their market situations. In the period of time since I completed the original fieldwork, some 40% of the Airfix craftsmen have been laid off.

Directions for Future Research

This unexpected turn of events provides the inspiration for the first of two suggestions for future research. One of the recurring problems in the empirical study of class imagery is the extent to which such images remain stable over time, unaffected by the range of social forces that unpinge upon an individual in the course of a lifetime.

It might be argued that the low priority accorded class in this study is a function of the generally rosy economic conditions prevailing at the time of the fieldwork. The interviews were conducted when the Alberta economy was expanding, when unemployment was minimal, when wage levels were high. However, affluence and full employment are the variables, not constants, of economic life, and must not be reified into conditions of quasi permanence. What is required of future research is an examination of the extent to which the changing fortunes of the economy necessitates a re-structuring of attitudes about class. Does an economy in recession make the concept of class a more viable interpretation of an individual's life situation? Given that the non-marxist social stratification literature emphasises such factors as full employment and high wages as prime determinants of working-class Conservativism and non-class images of the social structure, then it is no less plausible to hypothesize that their absence will contribute to a radicalisation of social attitudes. Future research should be directed towards answering this question, which is part and parcel of the broader issue of the role payed by personal experience in the change (or maintenance) of social attitudes.

The second major suggestion for future research concerns the determinants of class consciousness. The problematic nature of the findings emerging from this study of the skill-consciousness relationship have also been found in other recent studies of the structural sources of working-class consciousness. This has precipitated a change in theoretical direction for students of social stratification: of late, there has been a rejuvinated interest in what have variously been described as the non-work, cultural, or ideological influences upon workers' consciousness.

Portents of a different, if not necessarily, alternative approach to the determinants of working-class consciousness have been present in the literature for some time. Richard Hamilton, in his mid 1960s studies of working class politics in France and Germany, concluded that the prime determinant of attitude variation was workers' ideological background rather than their material circumstances. In Hamilton's formulation, the emphasis is upon cross-generational transmission of political attitudes. For instance, in France, Hamilton argues, the observed relationship between skill level and radical politics is explained by the fact that unskilled industrial workers are recruited from the ranks of radical farm labourers. Conversely, the relationship is reversed in those areas of France where the agricultural labour-force is more conservative. Thus the essence of this argument is that party loyalties are learnt early on as a part of an individual's political socialization. A similar argument has been expressed by Goldthorpe and Lockwood et al (1968) and, more recently, in a Canadian study conducted by Keddie (1980). The respective authors found that the source of variation in workers' political party loyalties and class identifications lay with the strength of respondents' white-collar affiliations -- whether, for instance, workers' wives had white-collar occupations.

However, it is in the area of cross-cultural research that a renewed interest in ideological variables and working-class consciousness has produced the highest dividend. Scase (1977), comparing British and Swedish workers in essentially similar work situations, finds significant attitudinal variations between his two samples. More specifically, the Swedish workers held more pronounced 'Left-wing' attitudes than their British counterparts. Scase accounts for these variations in terms of the greater strength of the 'radical meaning system' (cf. Parkin, 1972) in Sweden than in Britain. The Swedish workers' egalitarian views are a reflection of the pervasiveness of radical ideas, transmitted, since the 1930's, by a succession of Social Democratic Governments, as well as the Swedish Trade Union Confederation. Gallie (1978) uncovered similar variations between French and British oil refinery workers. These he explains by reference to deeply imbedded cultural differences (e.g. managerial ideologies, patterns of trade unionism), between Britain and France. These two studies show that the national and cultural context in which workers attitudes are investigated in itself an important determinant of working-class consciousness. Moreover, the significance of broadly conceived ideological variations is not limited to cross-cultural studies of class consciousness. In his study of British working-class consciousness, Hill (1978) concludes that ideological factors, which include both aspects of a worker's background and his present 'ideological location' -- a measure based on trade union involvement, labour party commitment and readership of the labour press -- accounts for more variation in class consciousness than do any array of factors pertaining to a respondent's work and market situation.

The attention given ideological variables in the present study is notable by its absence - the project has been conceived and operationalized exclusively in terms of structural, work-based determinants of working-class consciousness. Clearly the direction of future research lies in a closer examination of not only the ideological determinants of consciousness but also the relationship between structural and ideological causes (cf. Stephens, 1979). In this respect, the internal variations -- regional, ethnic, etc. -- that characterize Canadian society, might provide a suitable context in which a more focused examination of non-work influences upon social consciousness might take place. A comparison of Anglo and French Canadian workers springs immediately to mind. The factors -- historical, cultural, institutional -- that set Quebec apart from the rest of Canada might also operate as a source of variation in the consciousness of Franco- and Anglo-phone workers. Holding factors associated with the work situation (type of technology, size of workplace, etc.) constant, an assessment of the relative importance of structural and ideological sources of working-class consciousness can be offered.

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APPENDIX

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

THE FIRST SET OF QUESTIONS ARE CONCERNED WITH YOUR WORK:

1. First of all, can you tell me how long you have worked at _____.

   ___ under 6 months
   ___ over 6 months - 1 year
   ___ over 1 year - 18 months
   ___ over 18 months - 2 years
   ___ over 2 years - 3 years
   ___ over 3 years - 5 years
   ___ over 5 years - 10 years
   ___ over 10 years

2. What is your present occupation? Could you tell me just what it is that you do when you are at work?

3. Have you done any other jobs at ______? __ (yes/no)

   If no: Move on to question 4.

   If yes: What were they?

4. Do you have a second job in addition to the one you do at ______? __(yes/no). If Yes: How many hours a week do you work at that?

5. Can you tell me about the other jobs you have had before coming to ______. For each :
   a. name of firm
   b. location of firm
   c. type of job
   d. industry
   e. how long worked

6. Did you like any of your previous jobs more than the one you have now? If yes, which ones? Why?

6a. Why did you come to work for ____________ in the first place?

7. (a) How did you learn to do your present job? Did you

___ serve an apprenticeship

___ pick it up as you went along

___ go to trade school

___ other (specify)

(b) If served as an apprenticeship: In what trade was it? How long was it for?

8. Were there any minimum requirements you had to have to start the jobs? I mean, did you have to be a high school graduate, take any tests, or anything?

9. How long does it take to become fully skilled in your job?

10. (a) Have you ever thought about leaving your present job? If No, Why is that? If Yes, Why is that?

(b) If Yes: Have you ever done anything about it?

11. Are you paid at

___ an hourly rate,

___ a fixed weekly wage/salary,

___ a fixed monthly wage/salary, or

___ piece-rate?

12. Are you involved in any kind of shift work? _____ (yes/no). If Yes, How do you feel about shiftwork?

13. How many hours do you usually work in an average week (including any overtime you might do)?

14. What are some of the things that you like best about your present job? (Probe: good working conditions, friendly atmosphere, good wages, security, good promotion chances, interesting and worthwhile work)

15. What are some of the things you like least about your present job?

16. Do you think your take-home pay is:

___ very reasonable

___ reasonable

___ satisfactory

___ poor

___ very poor

Why do you say that?

17. Here are some of the things often thought important about a job. Which one would you look for first in a job? And which would you look for second?

___ interest and variety

___ good pay

___ good workmates

___ a supervisor who doesn't breathe down your neck

___ pleasant working conditions

___ a strong and active union

___ chance for plenty of overtime

18 If you had the choice of, on the one hand, working three hours less a week and getting the same money as you do now, or on the other hand, working the same hours as you do now, and getting more money, which would you choose?

___ the same money but three hours less

___ the same hours with more money

19. Is the speed at which you work controlled mostly by:

___ you

___ your workgroup

___ the speed of machinery you work with

___ other (please specify)

20. Do you ever find the pace of your work too fast?

21. Does your job give you a chance to try out ideas of your own?

22. How do you feel about the supervision you get in your job? Do you feel that you get:

___ too much ___ too little ___ about right

23. Do you work by yourself or with others? If with others, about how many men do you work with?

___ works alone ___ with others

24. In your job, how much do you talk to your workmates? Would you say:

___ a good deal

___ just now and then

___ hardly at all

25. When do you talk to them? For example, is it?

___ mainly during work

___ during coffee and lunch hours

___ other (please specify)

26. How many of the men who work with you would you call close friends?

27. How often do you see them outside of work?

28. Can you tell me the jobs or occupations of the people you spend most time with socially?

29. Have you been put out of work -- laid off, that is -- through no fault of your own at any time during the last five years?

___ (yes/no)

If yes, could you tell me when and here you were made unemployed and for how long?

30. (a) How secure would you say your present job is? Would you say it was:

___ completely secure	___ not very secure
___ quite secure	___ not secure at all

(b) Why do you say that?

31. The questions so far have all been about work. Overall, taking everthing into account, how much would you say you like your present job? Would you say you:

___ liked it very much	___ not very much
___ quite a lot	___ not at all

32. If there was one thing about your job that you could change, what would it be?

33. Suppose you were able to start your working life again, would you choose the same job that you have now?

34. Which of the manual jobs in your plant has the highest prestige among the men?

35. And which would you say has the lowest prestige?

36. If you are unable to work because of illness, do you still draw pay from your employer? If yes, how long can you go on drawing sick pay?

37. Upon retirement at 65, what kind of income (other than Canada Social Security) do you expect to have?

38. Provided you stay at the same firm, do you expect your wages to:

___ increase

___ decrease

___ remain unchanged as you get older?

39. What about the idea of promotion -- would you like to be promoted to a job "higher up" such as foreman or supervisor, or would you rather stay in your present job _________.

Why do you say this?

If you decided that you wanted it, what would you say are your chances of promotion at ___________. Would you say they were:

___ good
___ fair

___ not too good
___ very poor

40. What is the highest job you think you can get in your company?

41. One way a worker might improve his position is by starting up in business on his own. Have you ever thought of doing this? If yes, did you take the matter any further? What did you do? If no, why not?

42. Do you think that, on the whole, management is most concerned with:

___ the interests of the worker

___ the interests of the shareholders

___ the interests of everybody

43. Do you think that your firm could pay you more money than it does without damaging its prospects for the future?

44. Compared to other employers that you have had experience with or heard about, how would you rate _______ as a firm to work for.

___ better than most

___ about average

___ worse than most

45. If you left ___________ now would you have any difficulty finding another job at a similar level of pay in Edmonton?

THE NEXT SET OF QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP

46. Are you a member of a Trade Union? If no, why is that?

FOR NON-UNION MEN ONLY

47. Were you ever a Trade Union member? ____ (yes/no)

If yes, why did you leave? If no, have you ever seriously thought of joining a union? If yes, why didn't you then?

48. Do you have any serious objections to joining a union?

FOR TRADE UNION MEN ONLY

49. Which union do you belong to?

50. Why and when did you become a union member?

51. Do you think that compulsory union membership is a good or a bad thing? Why do you say that?

52. Have you ever held an official union post, or been a shop steward? If yes, what post do you hold, or have you held?

53. How often do you go to union local meetings? Would you say you go:

___ regularly
___ rarely
___ occasionally
___ never

ASK ALL

54. What do you think should be the aims of Trade Unions?

55. Do you think that a union should try to influence the opinions union members have about politics?

56. Have you been on strike at any time during the last five years? If yes, would you tell me when this was, why you were on strike and for how long?

57. Here are a number of statements that have been made about people's experiencing work (see attached sheet 1)

WELL, NOW WE COME TO A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT KIND OF QUESTION. SO FAR THE QUESTIONS HAVE CONCERNED YOUR FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES ABOUT WORK. BUT NOW I'D LIKE TO GET AN IDEA OF YOUR THOUGHTS ON SOME OTHER TOPICS, SO I CAN GET A MORE COMPLETE PICTURE OF HOW YOU LOOK AT THINGS.

58. First of all, some people have said that there are social clalsses in Canada, while other people disagree. What do you think?

59. What do you think are the major classes in this country today?

60. What social class would you say you were in?

61. Some people seem to think there are three major social classes in Canada: the upper class, the middle class, and the working class. If you had to choose one of these terms, which would you say you were in?

62. Ask informants identifying with the middle class: You wouldn't call yourself a working class person -- why is that?

Ask informants identifying with the middle class: You wouldn't call yourself a middle class person -- why is that?

63. What are the major factors which determine the class a person is in? (Probe: for example, family background, way he spends his money, his job, income, education).

64 (a) So what sort of people are in the working/middle class -- how would you describe a working/middle class person (use term chosen by respondent).

(b) How about the working/middle class -- how would you describe a working/middle class person? (Use term not chosen by respondent).

65. How large do you think each social class is in Edmonton. In other words, what percentage of Edmonton is upper class, what percentage is middle-class and so on?

66. (a) Do you think that many people move from one class to another these days?

(b) Why do you think this is the case?

67. Some people think that many unskilled and semi-skilled workers are doing as well these days as skilled tradesmen; other people disagree. What do you think?

68. Would you say unskilled and semi-skilled workers are in the same social class as skilled tradesmen? Why do you say that?

69. Here are a number of statements that people have made about Canadian Society (see attached sheet 2)

AND NOW I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR VIEWS ON POLITICS.

70. First of all, how interested would you say you are in politics? Would you say that you were:

___ very interested　　___ not very interested

___ quite interested　　___ not at all interested

71. Are you a member of a political party? If yes, which one?

72. In general, do you consider yourself to be a supporter of the Pc/s, Liberals, NDP, Socreds or none of them?

73. The following is a list of the major political parties in Canada. Could you place a check mark underneath the name of the party that you voted for in the recent provincial and federal elections. (see attached sheet 3)

74. Can you tell me, in general, what kinds of people you think support the:

PC's

Liberals

Socreds

NDP

75. Do you think that working class people in Canada should support a specific political party? If yes, which one?

THIS IS THE LAST SECTION, AND IN IT I WOULD LIKE TO ASK A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR BACKGROUND

76. First of all, can you tell me in what year you were born?

77. In what country were you born? If born outside of Canada, in what year did you come to Canada?

78 How about your parents, where were they born?

79. What was your father's usual job when you were growing up?

80. Do you know what grade your parents completed in school?

81. What was the last grade you completed in school?

82. Have you had any further education since then? ___ (yes/no)

If yes, what type (evening school, union education)

83. Are you:

___ married ___ single ___ separated/divorced

___ widowed ___ living common-law

84. Does your wife go out to work?

85. How long have you lived in Edmonton?

86. Where did you live before you moved to Edmonton?

87. Why did you move to Edmonton?

88. Could you tell me how many children you have, and how old they are?

89. If they work, could you tell me what job each of them has?

If they are still at home: What kind of job do you hope that they will end up doing?

What kind of job do you think they will end up doing?

90. (a) Do you own or rent this residence?

(b) Do you own (or are you buying) any property?

91. Here are a list of income categories (see attached sheet 4). Would you please check the category which corresponds to your average weekly earnings from your main job. Please include ordinary amounts of overtime.

Is that before or after deductions?

92. On the bottom of that card, is a number of yearly income groups. Could you please circle the letter of the group into which your family income from all sources before tax would fall in 1978 and would you just tell me the letter of the group which would apply to your income before taxes in 1978?

Here are a number of statements that have been made about people's experiences of work. I would like you to check whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the statements. If you are undecided, check between agree and disagree.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Most decisions taken by foremen and supervisors would be better if they were taken by the workers themselves.				
2. Most managements have the welfare of the workers at heart.				
3. Full team work in firms is impossible because workers and management are really on opposite sides.				
4. Managers know what's best for the firm and workers should do just what they're told.				
5. Most major conflicts between managements and workers are caused by agitators and extremists.				
6. Big business has too much power in this country.				
7. Giving workers more say in running their firms would only make things worse.				
8. Every worker should join a Trade Union because workers should stick together.				
9. Industry should pay more of its profits to workers and less to shareholders.				
10. The worker should always be loyal to his firm even if this means putting himself out quite a bit.				
11. All managements will try to put one over on the workers if they get the chance.				
12. The trade unions in this country have too much power.				

Federal Election

_____ Liberal

_____ Progressive Conservative

_____ New Democratic Party (NDP)

_____ Social Credit (Socreds)

_____ Other

_____ Did Not Vote

Provincial Election

_____ Liberal

_____ Progressive Conservative

_____ New Democratic Party (NDP)

_____ Social Credit (Socreds)

_____ Other

_____ Did Not Vote

Here are three statements that people have made about Canadian society. Would you read through each one and then circle the letter or the statement you agree with most.

A. There are several classes in Canada; although the upper classes run the country and industry, it is in everbody's interest that they do so.

B. In Canada today, there are basically two main classes -- bosses and workers -- and these classes have opposing interests.

C. Most people in Canada today belong to the same class -- the middle class -- and the only important difference is how much money they earn.

Average Weekly Income

_____ Under $150

_____ $150 - $200

_____ $200 - $250

_____ $250 - $300

_____ $300 - $350

_____ $350 - $400

_____ $400 - $450

_____ Over $450

Average Yearly Income

a. Under $2,000
b. $2,000 - $2,999
c. $3,000 - $3,999
d. $4,000 - $4,999
e. $5,000 - $5,999
f. $6,000 - $6,999
g. $7,000 - $7,999
h. $8,000 - $9,999
i. $10,000 - $11,999
j. $12,000 - $14,999
k. $15,000 - $17,499
l. $17,500 - $19,999
m. $20,000 - $22,499
n. $22,500 - $24,999
o. $25,000 - $29,999
p. $30,000 - $34,999
q. $35,000 and over